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A SERIES
OF
**EXTEMPORANEOUS
DISCOURSES,**

DELIVERED IN THE SEVERAL MEETINGS OF THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

IN
PHILADELPHIA, GERMANTOWN, ABINGTON, BYBERRY, NEWTOWN, FALLS,
AND TRENTON.

BY ELIAS HICKS,

A Minister in said Society.

TAKEN IN SHORT HAND BY M. T. C. GOULD.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH & EDWARD PARKER,

No. 178 Market Street.

J. Ashmead & Co. Printers.

1825.

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

{ L. S. } BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the second day of
October, in the forty-ninth year of the Independence
of the United States of America, A. D. 1825.

JOSEPH PARKER & EDWARD PARKER,

of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a
Book, the right whereof they claim as Proprietors, in the words
following, to wit :

“A Series of Extemporaneous Discourses, delivered in the se-
veral meetings of the Society of Friends, in Philadelphia, Ger-
mantown, Abington, Byberry, Newtown, Falls, and Trenton.
By Elias Hicks, a Minister in said Society. Taken in short hand
by M. T. C. Gould.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States
intituled, “ An act for the Encouragement of Learning, by se-
curing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and
proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned; ”
—And also to the act, entitled, “ An act supplementary to an
act, entitled, ‘ An act for the encouragement of learning, by
securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors
and proprietors of such copies during the times therein men-
tioned,’ and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing,
engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sermons were preached by Elias Hicks, of Jericho, Long Island, (now in his 77th year,) when returning from a visit to Baltimore, where he had been attending the late Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in that city. They commence with the second meeting he attended in Philadelphia, and end at the city of Trenton, N. J. including the two sermons preached by him in that place. They form, so far as they go, a regular series of discourses, as they were delivered by him, in the several meetings which he attended in the progress of this part of his journey, with the single exception of a prayer, and a short exhortation, delivered (in the absence of the Stenographer,) in the North meeting house, Philadelphia, on the 30th of the 11th month, 1824. The lapse of time intervening between the second and third discourses, was owing to confinement from a severe illness with which Elias Hicks was attacked during his stay in this city.

It is proper to state, in justice to Elias Hicks, that in consequence of an unfavourable position for hearing, occupied by the Stenographer, in very crowded assemblies, together with his want of acquaintance with the voice and manner of the speaker, and his rapid utterance, the first two sermons in the volume may be considered in some measure imperfect. This will account for the want of connexion apparent in several places. The publishers regret that similar causes have prevented them from laying before the public the sermon preached at Pine street

meeting house, on the morning of First day the 14th of 11th month, (the first taken,) as it is apprehended it would be difficult to give a satisfactory report of it.

With regard to the rest, it is believed they will be found mostly correct. It has been the object of the publishers to give a faithful copy of them, as they were delivered; to effect which, much care has been used, and they hope that few if any errors of importance will be found in them. It will be observed by the reader, that a few asterisks have been occasionally added, to indicate where sentences or parts of sentences have been lost. It will also be noticed towards the conclusion of several of the sermons, that an unusually wide space is left between the paragraphs. This is intended to show that the speaker here rose again, after having taken his seat.

It may be proper to state, that the speaker has had no concern in the publication of these discourses; and that he declined examining the printed sheets previous to publication.

In concluding their remarks, the publishers take this opportunity of expressing their satisfaction with regard to the ability and integrity of the Stenographer whom they employed on the occasion.

Philadelphia, 3 mo. 1st. 1825.

STENOGRAPHER'S NOTE.

THE subscriber considers it his duty to explain some of the circumstances attending the production of this volume. He is aware that great difficulty must at all times attend the compilation of such a work, from the lips of a public speaker; and in this case, he conceives, that his task has been rendered still more arduous, from circumstances beyond the control of a stenographer. Among these, are, the difficulty in hearing, and the inconvenience of writing in a crowded gallery, without the benefit of a table. But he has endeavoured to give an impartial copy of the discourses as delivered; and is not conscious, of having done injustice to the speaker or to the public. With this conviction, he submits the result of his labours, with confidence, to the candour of thousands, who heard the discourses; and upon whose decision, the skill and fidelity of the stenographer can alone be established. Should errors be discovered, it is hoped that the eye of charity will trace their origin, through the medium of this apology, to other sources than the will of the publick's humble servant.

M. T. C. GOULD.

February, 1825.

SERMON I.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, MULBERRY ST.
IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, ON FIRST DAY AFTER-
NOON, 14th OF ELEVENTH MONTH, 1824.

THERE is one thing necessary in this crowded assembly, and that is, for us individually, to endeavour to be still. The importance and seriousness of the occasion upon which we have assembled demand it.

I am induced to observe, that since we have been sitting together in this meeting, my mind has been led to an impressive view of the excellency and power of divine love—pure, undefiled love; for what is it, my friends, that this love cannot effect? I was ready to say, that it would do every thing that man could want to be done. It stops the mouth of the lion; it quiets every savage disposition in man, and brings him to that state, of which the prophet speaks, where the lion and the lamb shall lie down together. We are told that it fulfils the law. I believe it may be said to fulfil all law. It is a very clear, rational proposition, that every reflecting mind must understand and see; because it can have no other motive than to do good; no aim but to promote truth and righte-

ousness; and therefore every obligation that attaches to us as reasonable and social beings, is within the compass and power of love to effect, and to put in practice. But in the first place; although it has the appellation of love, it will also bear the appellation of light; that light which searches all things;—all the hidden things of darkness;—for, as God is love, so God is light, and these are indivisible.

In the working of its power upon the children of men, it shows them every defilement that is about them;—it is so penetrating, that it searches all the dark cavities of the soul, and brings all to light. It gives every rational creature a perfect view of his state, and in the most moving language and impressions of that feeling that love only produces in the soul.

The soul that is brought under its influence cannot err, whilst that governs; for it is stronger than death. It enables the rational creature to surrender himself up, a victim to death;—to suffer his enemies, or any power whatever, to take his life, rather than to break the bands of love, or in any way trespass upon it. See, O see, what is it that love cannot effect, for all the children of men that are willing to be guided by it!

Some may query how we shall come at it? It is as clear as the proposition itself. It requires nothing of man but to submit; and what is still more, it leaves no stone unturned to

bring him to a knowledge of its real nature, its real essence; for I have no doubt, my friends, that most of us believe, that if God is love, he has intended that his rational creatures should all be brought under its power, and be partakers of its excellency. He could have had no other design in the creation of man.

Then, my friends, why is it so much otherwise? Why is there so little of this love experienced among the children of men? Yea, we may bring it to our own family circles; for want of dwelling in this love, they are divided one against another. They find in their own experience, the fulfilment of that declaration of Jesus, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword.” “A man’s enemies shall be they of his own household”—that his coming would set “the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, the daughter against the mother, the mother in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” Now, all this, is for want of being willing to come and be subjected to the influence of this glorious principle, that is from youth to age, wooing of us, and using every means that God knows how to use. He is willing to recall the rebellious children of men into obedience to his will, and thus to give him up his rightful prerogative.

We shall be brought to acknowledge one day, I trust, that he has made manifest, what his will is. He has shown to every one his way—he has called us again and again—he has repeated his calls, and not been weary; but in abundant mercy and loving kindness, leaving no stone unturned, to bring us to this influence; that we might be wedded to it in such a manner, that by continuing under its power, we may be brought into its true and pure nature. We might bring a variety of instances to enforce this view, one of which presents to my mind. It is the declaration of the apostle Paul: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” See how very plain this is. If we would but endeavour to fulfil the law of God, every obligation, as social beings, and as accountable beings, he would enable us to come into the performance of. Why then stand out any longer? Why give way to tamper with temptations, and let our uncultivated passions arise in our minds, so that instead of turning us into lambs, they make us like beasts of prey, trying to harm one another?

Some may query—By what means shall we know, when the Spirit presents itself to be our leader? It is a plain proposition, and we can know it, if we only have a willingness. He has not left a rational creature, without a witness in his own soul. He does not send them away to

find out what his will is: the knowledge is within their own breasts. There it is that he gives a display of his goodness. He calls upon us to come away from every thing that has a tendency to annoy and hurt either soul or body,—to the leading of his blessed light and Spirit.

And here as we begin, let us begin as he begins. We know not how to begin ourselves.—We may go to books and to men, but they will not enable us to take one step in the right way, unless we are brought home to a knowledge of love in our own souls. All that men or books can do, is to point us to this great principle, which is only to be known in our own souls. The wise and the good have all pointed us to this principle, still we have neglected it—still we have dallied along. We have not been willing to come to the practical part. The Apostle tells us, “by grace ye are saved through faith;” but where is the man, or where is the woman, that has been saved by it, who have rebelled against it, who have been negligent, who have delighted more in following their own ways or spirits, than to be regulated by the love of God in their own souls. We are too apt to amuse ourselves with vanities; for every thing is vanity which fails of answering this great end. The way to arrive at a knowledge of this divine love, and the way to be enabled to fulfil the whole law, is to love all the creation of God,

and do right to all, men and beasts. And yet, how far are we from doing this. We are reading the Bible, from youth to old age, which testifies and tells us what we ought to do. We are making a great deal of it. Many idolize it; and yet, if we judge by their fruits, we shall not see that they believe the book they read at all. Their general works are in direct opposition to its teaching. The letter, if we trust to it, kills; but the Spirit, and nothing but the Spirit, can give us true life.

I will now, as it comes before me, mention an argument of Paul. It was his great concern to convert the Gentiles to the Christian faith, by which they might be saved with an everlasting salvation;—and, what are we but Gentiles? He leads us on by excellent counsel: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” It appeals to us sensibly and rationally—“but he hath revealed them unto us,” that is believers; those who attain to life,—“he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Shall we believe, then, that the letter,—nay, the best letter ever written or engraved on earth,

can bring us to know God? If what the apostle declared, is true—and it is reasonable to every rational creature—we must give in, to this conclusive argument, that nothing, but the Spirit of God, can teach us the will of God. The effect never ought to be put in the place of the cause; for the effect can never be the cause, so that it is only the light, which he has manifested to the children of men that must direct us. Because we cannot suppose, that he is so unmindful of the well being of his creation, as to suffer them to depend for any thing at second hand. We must all bring it to the test of the Spirit. Paul was aware of this, when he told them “follow me as I follow Christ.” How were they to know that he followed Christ, in any other way, except by the revelation of God, in their own souls? “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

O, my friends, what will be our lot, by and by, if we are not more concerned, to gather to this powerful love, which will enable us to fulfil all the laws of God and man, which are founded in justice; and without studying them, too, my friends; because perfect love, can never have but one way of doing good. Here now we may see the danger of putting off and procrastinating. Yesterday we were doing well, and

to-day we may be led on well, but to-morrow we know not what may be our condition. Hence, it is necessary for us to go on, from day to day, under the direction of the divine light, as pointed out to the Israelites in their outward journeying, under the direction of that visible guide which God had appointed. Did he trust to what Moses said to them? No, he caused a light to follow them by night, and a cloud to guide them by day. I will not leave you to the direction of men, even the best of men, who may be highly blest—I will give you an evidence. Now if God was thus gracious, to give an evidence to Israel in that low and humble dispensation, how much more will he do so, in this Gospel dispensation? Have we not a more excellent leader than that of fire by night, and a cloud by day, which were only seen by the outward senses? When under the direction of the Gospel dispensation, he gives us a light above all the brightness of the sun. By this he leads all his children; “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” What is this Spirit of God? It is light and life in the soul of man. It teaches us all things, and brings all things to our remembrance, which it is necessary for us to remember. He does not deal superfluously with us; he never can require something for nothing. He never did do it, and he never will. It would be inconsistent with his nature;—therefore, we

may believe him, for it is impossible for him to lie. It is impossible for him to do any thing, contrary to justice, mercy, and truth. But we are so attached to outward things, that we have gone to the book, and when we read it, we did not turn in to search by the light in our understandings, to be informed of its true meaning; but we have undertaken by our own power to interpret it: and thus, instead of its proving a blessing, it confounds and divides Christendom, into thousands and thousands of sects and professions. The language is confounded, because they undertake to build castles, which will reach to heaven, for themselves. All these must fall; —there is nothing that will do, but to exclude all external things, and depend on the light of God in the heart; there is nothing else that can do it, there is nothing else that ever did do it. We see how excellent the law was formerly to the Israelites; and yet it was not enough to make them perfect, unless it led them to the Spirit. The prophets became spiritually minded. Moses, at the recommendation of his father-in-law, appointed seventy to be judges in Israel, and the Lord's Spirit was poured upon them, and they began to prophesy in the camp. How carnal they were;—when these elders began to speak, they went and complained to Moses, that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp. Moses said, “I would to God, that all

the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." Here he had a view of the excellency of this Spirit, and desired that every one should be a teacher of righteousness and a prophet, because they are altogether under the influence of the Spirit of God ; they are led on by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore the prophet declared, they would be as sons and daughters ; thus he would be a father to them, and they should be his sons and daughters. Nothing can do this for us but turning our thoughts inward. How instructive was it in the man Jesus, in that outward tabernacle. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Wherefore this light is in every one of us. We have all a manifestation of it, sufficient for our own end. He had the fulness of it, as we have our several allotments. There was nothing superfluous in order to effect his great and glorious purpose among the children of Israel. "In him was life ; and the life was the light of men." That is, every one is enlightened by the same divine light that Jesus was enlightened with ; and we receive it from the same source. He says, "It is not I that do these things, but the Father that dwells in me."

Who was his father ?—He was begotten of God. We cannot suppose that it was the outward body

of flesh and blood that was begotten of God, but a birth of the spiritual life in the soul. We must apply it internally and spiritually. For nothing can be a son of God, but that which is spirit; and nothing but the soul of man is a recipient for the light and Spirit of God. Therefore, nothing can be a son of God but that which is immortal and invisible. Nothing visible can be a son of God. Every visible thing must come to an end, and we must know the mortality of it. Flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven.—By the analogy of reason spirit cannot beget a material body, because the thing begotten must be of the same nature with its father. Spirit cannot beget any thing but spirit; it cannot beget flesh and blood—No, my friends, it is impossible.

Jesus declared, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” He alluded to the inquiry of Nicodemus, how a man could be born again? He shows him it was not a natural but a spiritual birth; for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” He, therefore, said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Man is a compound being. One part is composed of flesh and blood; the other part of spirit, and as the immortal soul is born of the spirit and power of God, it becomes a son of God. This has been the effect in all ages as the soul has come up in obedience to the spirit of

God. For see, a son having the full nature of the father, must have the same nature and will. Jesus declares what we ought to do: “I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” We are not sent here to do our own will, but to serve God in newness of life. So that what seems to be my mission among my fellow creatures, is to endeavour to lead the minds of my fellow creatures to the substance, and not to the shadow; and from every thing external as nothing but shadow. Because heavenly things cannot be seen by our natural senses: we cannot make an image even of our own soul, much less of God. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.” He will not give his praise to graven images. If we make to ourselves any image of Jesus Christ, it is as much an idol to us, as Juggernaut is to the eastern nations.

I would ask, did we ever see our own soul, or can we comprehend it? We feel that we have something powerful within us, operating upon this animal machine, but we can form no figure or likeness of it. It is altogether out of our power, or comprehension, to make a likeness of the soul. God is a spirit, and therefore, nothing

can be worship, but that which is in spirit and in truth; and this is a work carried on by the Spirit of God, in the spirit of man, both invisible to all the outward comprehension of the creature. We feel we have it—we feel its power. It is as self-evident to us as the operation of the light and heat of the sun in the outward. So it is, that the outward is like an index. Man is a tabernacle for the soul, during the day of probation. The outward sun reveals all the world outwardly. By means of the light of the sun, the soul has a capacity of exercising itself upon outward things. If we take away our reason we could make no proper use of them. Will men give away their reason for any thing? Will they give away reason and take the bible? No. Because, without this their bible would be good for nothing. We cannot with all our reasoning powers, however, penetrate into the things of God, or that which concerns the soul of man. When we turn inward we find something which the outward senses cannot comprehend. It is this revealing spirit that gives us a view of the things of God, and our minds can then act upon them. There is no recipient for that revelation but the soul of man; for the things of God are not to be seen by our natural senses, but in our own souls. And, here, our reason draws conclusions, which are comforting and cheering. Therefore, we are not to

try these things by external matter; for if we should try the operations of our souls by books, we set the letter above the spirit; we turn back to darkness, for the letter killeth, but the spirit only giveth life. Oh, that we might be more spiritually minded, more gathered inward, to the light of grace in our souls. What can we do without it? Nothing at all. We must stand as blanks on the earth, unless we are turned inward to the teachings of God in our souls.

Now to confirm this, I will remember us of the saying of a wise and good man of former times. “**By grace ye are saved, and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.**” This is a foreordination I admit: But by it the Almighty never could intend any thing but good works. For unless he had given man the power of choice, he could not be accountable for any works he did. If he had not this power of choice, he would be a mere machine.

Another Apostle says, “**He that believeth on the son of God, hath the witness in himself.” “For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.”**—I appeal to this large assembly, whether they do not know this to be truth? “teaching us, that denying ungod-

liness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." We all know, by its teaching, what is good and what is evil, and, therefore, every one ought to believe in it. We may have this grace, and not be taught by it, so as to be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God, and of Christ our Lord."

How plain and how easy is the way cast up—that the Lord has cast up, if we are only willing and obedient: the willing and obedient learn, and hear, and they will be led by the Spirit and love of God shed abroad in the heart.

Now, don't let all this be as a pleasant song to you; for I have come to point you to that which can mend your hearts, and that is all I can do for you. When I have pointed you to the thing, I have done all that I can do, or all the ministers on the earth. Here we must leave you, in the hands of God. Submit yourselves, then, and become the clay; let him be the potter, and he will work a great and glorious work in you. Oh! how great and glorious is his name. His name is his power, and his power he is dispensing to all, enabling them to do his will. We can add nothing to him; he wants nothing from us. Every thing he does is for our sakes. Then, if we love him, ought we not to do every thing for him, and not for ourselves? When we do this we do nothing for our own sakes, but

when we work for our own sakes we are selfish. All we do, ought to be done for the glory of God; whether in eating, in drinking, or in putting on of apparel; let it all be for the glory of God. Because we cannot do it for our own glory unless we are selfish.

The effect of love in the soul is, to crucify the man of sin and son of perdition, and cast him out with all his deeds. But we keep tampering with temptations.

O, my dear young people, no longer stand aloof! Can you be so unwise, as for the sake of some ribbon or little bauble, to suffer your minds to be led astray from your God? Will you give way to these vanities, and so barter away your everlasting happiness? Be persuaded by one who loves you, to choose the Lord for your portion;—listen to hear his words: they are all-powerful to believers, and those who feel a desire after righteousness. Let us become tired of the vanities of this life; and let us be willing to give up all to God. Let us press on, as Paul recommends, “toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Yet he acknowledged he had not attained all; “but I press forward toward the mark.” So we ought to do as long as we are here in this probationary state. We ought continually to be rising higher and higher in divine enjoyment. See how it was with the apostle;—he

acknowledges that when he was taken up into the third heaven he saw things not fit to be related. What is this third heaven but a three-fold manifestation or enjoyment of the divine presence, in which things are revealed not lawful to be uttered, because they would not be understood by the people?—It was expressed in a way to encourage us. Then let us come to the same state, and we shall enjoy it; and be able to go on from one degree of perfection to another. But time will fail to speak of these things to the full. A word to the wise may be sufficient.

It is my prayer and heart's desire, that you improve and try it. Search the Scriptures, as we read the Bereans did, and see whether these things are not so. But you cannot know them, by reading them merely; but as you are directed by the light of the divine Spirit. Under the influence of that Spirit, you may not only read and understand them, but you will be confirmed thereby. This Spirit led the ancients, and it will lead us. Our experience will all correspond, when we come to understand this. Our doctrines will be alike brought forth out of the treasury.

I have little cause to conclude, that I shall ever see your faces again. I want you to be encouraged, and to turn inward to the Lord your God, and know that he is good. Often retire to the closet of your hearts, and he will give you strength to perform every duty.

I can look back to the time when I was young; and used to sit in the corner of my master's house, meditating upon the law of God. He showed me the way I ought to walk, and so he will do to you, if you will turn your thoughts inwardly. All this he does for youth; —he makes them feel his goodness and love. This I am a witness of; then my own soul was mollified. O try to turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart. O that you might be willing and obedient. But I must draw to a close. “Cease to do evil, learn to do well; plead for the widow. Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye are willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”

PRAYER.

Gracious and adorable God, in the riches of thy mercy, deign to look down upon thy poor creature man. Be pleased, O Lord, to bless and sanctify this opportunity, to all present, if consistent with thy holy will. Thou knowest, gracious God, that we of ourselves can do nothing. We are clothed in weakness. Thou knowest, that the work is thine; and that the power is thine. Graciously condescend to

strengthen us, and quicken us, to come near unto thee—to draw near unto thee, and cast down our crowns at thy footstool. Strengthen the weak and disconsolate soul; lift up the head that is ready to hang down, and confirm the feeble knee. Help us more and more to draw together; to turn unto thee, with thanksgiving and glory, who remains to be God over all, blessed for ever, and ever more.

I am thankful for this opportunity; and have now one request more to make; and this is, that we may part in a sober and quiet manner, without crowding. Let every thing be done decently and in order.

SERMON II.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' NORTH MEETING-HOUSE, IN THE
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, ON THIRD DAY, 16th OF ELE-
VENTH MONTH, 1824.

“To do good and to communicate forget not,” is an ancient declaration, which has lost nothing of its excellency by age. It is the disposition which must reign in every good man and woman. But how much more pre-eminently excellent is the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, where he endeavours to enforce upon us the necessity of our loving our enemies, doing good to those who hate us, blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. Add to this his holy example towards his offending disciple, Judas, that although he knew his heart, and no doubt, his secret machinations to betray him and take his life, yet how he continued with him! What goodness, what love, that he was permitted, even at the last supper, to take part with his master; and even when he came to fulfil his traitorous design, Jesus kissed him! What deep instruction!—what a mighty example!

Ought we not all to come into the same disposition—the same condition? Can we be christians

without it? Can we do good and communicate good, without it? What a mighty effect had this upon Judas—this loving act of his master! By the power of divine love how he was overcome! What a blessed condition! Ought it not to be our concern to labour after it without ceasing, and never give over the pursuit till we have attained it? For until we attain to this disposition, we can hardly be said to do good; for nothing else will ever enable us to do it with a sincere heart. We must have that powerful love, which is stronger than death—that love which casts out all fear. What wonders has it not done, and what wonders will it not still do among the children of men.

These things have been brought to my remembrance since sitting in this meeting, and I deemed it right to communicate them at this time, that we might be brought into serious reflection.

The only way we can expect to profit, is, on such occasions, to bring ourselves to feel the power of this divine love—this divine light. They are one, indivisibly one; and therefore, if we would bring our deeds to the light at this time, and compare them with the love of Jesus in his example to Judas, what a clear view we could have of ourselves, and of our state and condition to approach the Lord. He is love, and love may be considered as comprehending all his pow-

er and all his wisdom ; but goodness is the most proper term that we can apply.

¶ I apprehend we shall all agree, that we can be brought into this condition. It would do as great wonders as it ever did. It would banish all contention and war. This was the design of the new covenant dispensation. It was the design of the coming of Christ to put an end to sin and transgression. And there is no other medium through which it is to be effected, but as we come individually into this condition. Then, when we meet our worst enemies, we shall, like Jesus, overcome them with love. Let us then cultivate this disposition. It is the only true medium through which to bring down the power of darkness. And yet how different from this, are many men.

I remember a circumstance of two brothers who lived near my own habitation. They lived near together, and were exercised in the same concerns, but were both so bowed down under the power of darkness, they did not speak to each other for several years ; and no doubt the same causes will produce the same effects in others. I do not know that there are any such here, but let us be upon our guard, against sinking into such a state of degradation.

These individuals became a by-word in the neighbourhood, and to all the children of men who knew them. Here we may learn, not only by

elect those who do not elect him. It therefore stands in our own choice ; and if, after all he has done in putting us in the way to do right, we do not give up to be governed by his light and grace, we cannot be elected of him. But if we attend to this and do his will, we shall all come to experience a conquest over every temptation that is troubling us from day to day : although we might have slipped as our first parents did, when we had not lived to see by experience the consequence of evil. It was the case of our first parents ; they had not experienced evil, till they were brought to a knowledge of it, when seeking to accomplish what they were led to by temptation. Is not this our case now, every individual of us ?

Have we not all sinned, and come short of the glory of God—and how shall we know that he is a merciful God? If we stand aloof and act directly contrary to the example set by his son, shall any of us be saved? But when he meets us in the cool of the day, when our mind is drawn from its own will, his loving Spirit will come upon us, and show us what to do, and convince us of the rectitude of our ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. He requires nothing else of us, if we will believe our own individual experience. When we have beheld his tender mercies, have we not all been confounded and impeached as our first parents were? And when he

convinces us of his design in reproving us, here is the time when his mercy and grace are calling us to come away. The language is this : “Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow.” What a field is here opened for self-examination ! Have we been concerned to do well, and take upon ourselves to do all the good we can, and as little hurt as possible ? This is an excellent religion, to do as much good, and as little hurt as possible. Have we been willing to relieve the oppressed, or have we left it for others to do for us ? All these things the light would bring to us, if we were rightly engaged ; if we were brought into a condition to search our own hearts. “How often is the candle of the wicked put out ?” Even in this we find encouragement, because the candle could not be often put out, unless it was also often lighted ; which shows the mercy of God, and his willingness to show them the right way.

Our every day’s observation, admonishes us, to cease to do evil and learn to do well, to plead for the widow. Now can those who are taking from the widow to aggrandize themselves be complying with this requirement ? Is not this the case with **Missionary Societies** and those connected with them ? If they had the glory of God in view, they would, instead of taking from them, give to them all they have to spare of their

own. But they do it under this pretence; they call on them to give, for God's sake, if they will not do it for their own sakes. Is it not so? Can it be denied? Here now what deep search we want. Custom and tradition are powerful things. They lead the children of men into darkness, by little and little. Thus they are led on according to custom and practice, under cover of some high sounding name, involving themselves deeper and deeper in darkness, till they can go on in works directly opposed to God and his cause. Let us dig deep and search for ourselves; and no longer lend an ear to the lo, heres, and lo, theres, but let us be willing to do like Mary of old. She had but one beloved. And what did she do? Did she do like her sister Martha? She was troubled about many things, and seemed desirous to do what she could to serve their master. But Mary knew her own inability. She knew that she was not qualified for any good purpose, work, or word of herself. In her humiliation her judgment was taken away. She was brought to see her worthlessness. Here she humbled herself at the feet of Jesus, to wait for the words which should fall from his mouth. Remember this was a typical dispensation, and affords an excellent example for those who have no outward object to look to. She was under this dispensation, and here she did just right; she gave up all to him whom she believed

to be the Prophet and the Messiah of Israel ; who had come to do away the ceremonial law and religion. Here she trusted not in her own judgment or ability, but sat down at his feet and waited to be instructed of him, while her sister, who had undoubtedly some love for her master, continued to pursue her worldly concerns, as many do in the present day, who may have a great deal of love, but who do not go the right way to work, as Mary did. They go to work in their own ability, setting one another to work as Martha would have done: "Bid her therefore that she help me." See how those whom I have mentioned, are setting each other to work ; crying out for aid, in money, or any thing else that they have at their command. I cannot believe that they have any other aim or object, than the gratification of their own selfish desires, like Martha of old.

What was Jesus' answer to Martha ? He reprehended her, but he did it with love. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things ; but one thing is needful ; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Mind, my friends, what is that good part, that Jesus directed his disciples to, and directs us to in the present day ? He did not tell them to go to books or to men ? No : but they were to sit down like Mary under a sense of their own nothingness ; and when he

went to leave them, all their hope was gone, they could do nothing but attend to his commands, and wait in humble silence for the Comforter which he told them the Father would send in his name. Here then is the place we must gather to, and set down like Mary at the divine footstool, and attend to the instructions of the only true teacher under heaven, to any of the rational children of men. He is the sole teacher to us, as Jesus was to Mary. Here we see that this Comforter was distinct from him: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter."

What was this Comforter? It was a spiritual one; it was a new divine law; it was that which crosses the selfish disposition of man. This was the cross. There is nothing that can crucify the will of man, but this divine Spirit; for God is a Spirit, and his Spirit is the law. He manifests himself, in his love to every one of his rational children, teaching them what they ought to do, and what they ought to leave undone. It is then left for them to make the election; and how clear the way is, my friends! The wayfaring man though a fool may know it; it is so plain and so easy. And what excellent opportunities have we, to improve, when through his gracious goodness we are enabled

to sit down and wait upon him. But have we come as Mary did, to sit down at his feet, or have we been trying to bring up portions of Scripture and other written books? If we have been studying these, we are beside our proper business; but if we strive to do as Mary did, to banish every unruly or selfish imagination from the soul, although we cannot do this of ourselves, yet, if we seek to do it, the Spirit will help our infirmity. When I recommend this stillness, I am aware that it is not in the power of man to command it, but it is no sign the Almighty cannot do it for us. And when we consider that his glory, and our happiness consist in it, will we not endeavour after this state. Oh! that we might remember this. All that we have to do, is to do as the sons of God did formerly. They met often, but we do not hear of any particular exercise, by which they were busied with unnecessary and unprofitable thoughts. It is the great warfare of a christian, to bring every vain imagination to the cross of Christ, in order to be in a condition to hear that still small voice. For it was testified to the Lord's children, that he would restore to them a teacher that should no more be removed into a corner; "but thine eyes shall see thy teacher, and thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk in it." Now, my friends, how are we to see or know this teacher? Are we to do it with

our natural eyes or external senses? No, by no means. Our teacher is invisible to the outward view of man. Nothing but having the mind opened and enlightened, can enable us to see this teacher, and hear his gracious instructions. Here we shall surrender all up to him. Jesus declared, "the kingdom of God is within you;" and he sits as a refiner and purifier in the soul. We need not look a great way off, or to the end of the world, because he always sits upon his seat in the heart, and we can bring all our deeds to the light, and have them tried at the judgment seat.

"Some men's sins go beforehand to judgment, and some follow after." What are we to understand by this? All good men who are seeking to be instructed by the divine law written in the mind; these are those that know their sins to go before to judgment. As we repent and reform, he cleanses our hearts from them, and banishes them from us. Those who will not come home to this internal test, but, like Felix, turn away this blessed teacher; those are they, who will go on accumulating sin, till the final close; and all these sins will be pressing upon them, when upon a sick bed and a rolling pillow: these are they, whose sins come afterward, even sinking the soul to despair. Oh! that we might learn while the opportunity and means are enjoyed!

We are all the work of the same holy hand; and, therefore, we have no right to exalt ourselves one above another. Let him that is greatest be servant of all, after the example of his master. But this does not suit us; those who are set up by their brethren, instead of being servants, assume to themselves, the prerogative of being masters: They neglect their duty, and turn to the exercise of their own powers. There is but one way for us, my friends; and I do not want to be tedious in expression; but I feel that love that reaches to the ends of the earth; that love which can do every thing; that love which is shed abroad in the heart of every good man, and that love which brought Mary to sit at the feet of Jesus.

There is no outward Comforter, no outward teacher, that can do the work for us in any way, or give us a knowledge of what the will of the Father is; for nothing else can do it, but the divine teacher within, the light and spirit of God. In any other way we may look from youth to old age and never find it; for Jesus declared to the Jewish people, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” He was now under a figurative dispensation; but he points them to a Comforter not incumbered with flesh and blood, but an immediate teacher to the soul, invisible to their external comprehension. It must be so, for you know that our own souls are invisible, as God is

invisible ; and is it not plain to us that the animal eye cannot discern spirit. And this immortal spirit in man, is what constitutes the Son of God. Nothing but the immortal soul can become a Son of God. He has conferred on us such power as is suited to the necessities of his creatures ; and as we attend to it we may come to the spirit and power, which enables us to be his children ; “ for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” and none other. Then we must conclude, that this Spirit is not any thing that we have seen, or that we can see ; “ for it dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. And when it cometh it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance ; and will guide you into all truth.”

How plain and how simple it is ! Then what have we to do, but to gather home to this Spirit ? We have met together for a religious purpose. We have met under the pretence of worshipping God ; but alas ! how few are there in this assembly that do it ! What a small number of those assembled on this day, will know any thing of worshipping God in spirit and in truth ! What is the reason of this ? We have not come to the state Mary came to, and that every christian must be brought to. We must become as blanks in the world as it regards our own will ; we must have no judgment of our own, no knowledge in the concern. We are to wait on God

in this humility. When we are brought to this condition—and we cannot be brought to it till we go on gradually, in the way pointed out, “Cease to do evil, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow”—then he will come in and reason with us. He will not open a way for us to worship in spirit and in truth, until we cease from all evil, and learn to do well. The Almighty cannot unite with us, and speak with us face to face, till we are brought off from all those sins which are in direct opposition to his holy nature.

Well why is it, then, that we assemble so often and do not worship? Is it not like reflecting on him?—And will it not be an abomination in his sight, and worse for us than if we had not assembled,—if we go on and do not cease to do wrong! And it is not only when we are assembled, that we are to cease from evil, but through every hour of the day, otherwise we are liable to fall into evil. Especially at even tide, it is our duty to bring in review, all the doings of the day, and see if any thing has been done in our own will, for our selfish gratification. He condescends to meet us, and as we give up, and acknowledge our sins, he gives us the gift of repentance; and what presumption it is, to lie down and go to sleep, before we know that our peace is made with God. Consider, my friends, how often do persons die in their

sleep: then what must become of those who are not reconciled to their heavenly Father. We cannot be reconciled to our fellow creatures, if we are not reconciled to our God. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" This shows that if we do not love our brother, we cannot love God. Look at the dreadful state into which we may plunge ourselves, by not coming forward to do the best we can for our fellow creatures. There is nothing but the power of love can bring about a victory over jealousy, which is more cruel than the grave. If there is jealousy in our minds concerning our brethren, we can not be the servants of God. No one that is watching for evil, can be serving him. But when we consider the excellency of the christian religion—the beauty and excellency of it—are we not ready to shudder at the thought, that we commit so many great sins without any just reason why we should commit any sin. I speak my own experience; for I never committed any sin, but because I loved it better than my God.

I appeal to your own judgment, my friends—Does not our supreme love always determine? If we commit any evil, we know that we love it more than we love our God. This is what makes us feel guilty: we should not feel guilty, if we did not know that we had done contrary to what we might have done. It is our own election, and by

our election, we must stand or fall ; for none can be God's elect, but those who choose God for their portion. He has not foreordained a certain number to happiness. He cannot bring man to happiness by force ; we must choose for ourselves. He has made us rational creatures, that we might improve under his power. Nothing can force us into happiness ; for force is the destruction of all happiness. Do we not see it every where, where compulsion is made use of ?

As these things were brought to my mind, I have endeavoured to express them. May we carry them home, every individual of us—I wish to be one with you : for every day calls for diligence, watchfulness, and scrutiny into the feelings and temperament of our own minds. If we would search diligently by the candle of the Lord, every thing that creates pain would be banished ; for no sin can come from God Almighty ; it is all the creation of man. He being poor and impotent, he cannot create any thing that will endure for ever ; and if he will come to bear the Divine hand upon him, there is “balm in Gilead,” there is “a physician there.” If we become sin-sick and turn about to this physician, and cease to do evil and learn to do well, he will heal us of all our sins, and banish from us that which brings trouble and distress upon us. As in the outward sense, fevers bring distress upon the body : and how are they driven out by the skil-

ful physician, and cast into the ocean of annihilation, and the man is restored to health! So if we come to the physician of souls, and follow the example of the sick man, and submit to his direction, our sins will all be annihilated. My dear friends, I consider that I am speaking to rational beings; and Oh! that you might, individually, with me, improve these great blessings. It is this that sets us above the beasts of the field, and if we do not improve, it is our own fault, and we must suffer the consequence.

Although I apprehend, that my friends comprehend and understand what I have said, so as not to put a wrong construction upon it, yet one thing has struck my mind, that it may be said, what will become of all those who are engaged as I have mentioned? Are these all to be lost? No, my friends. I believe in the mercy of a gracious God. We may remember what the apostle declared, that “Satan”—the name given to that tempting disposition in us, which is the man of sin, self, and self-will in man—there is no other man of sin that I ever knew or found. Now it was said that Satan would “transform himself into an angel of light,” and, “if it were possible, deceive the very elect.” Now all those who do not elect God to be their portion, are liable to be deceived by anti-christ. But those who have elected him, are brought into a state

of love and confidence, which casts out all fear. Satan's head has been bruised and broken. There is a victory obtained over all the powers of darkness. They who have not elected God for their portion, they are in a state of probation. The Lord is looking upon them with propitious mercy, and is willing to help them.

When we have been trying to find happiness in the things of sense, and find ourselves deceived and disappointed, then we are brought to repent of our sins, as Solomon did, and to count all vanity. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity." They must come to it : this is my full belief. All these works that are going on in the will and power of man —these external things—must all be disappointed ; and the sooner the better they are brought to see their vanity. For here they will recant the whole, like Solomon, who sums up all in this, "Fear God and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man."

O, my friends, behold the most powerful and most merciful of all Beings !—his love is over all. He not only forgives seven times, but seventy times seven, and much more ; and, therefore, graciously waits upon us till we have filled up our portion of wickedness. Oh ! be warned to turn about, and seek a reconciliation with God. Elect him for your portion, in such a way, as to have no confidence in any thing else.

SERMON III.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' WESTERN MEETING-HOUSE, IN
THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, ON FOURTH DAY, 1ST OF
TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

WE often hear the expression that “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush ;” and although this seems to be a maxim peculiar to the fowler, still it will apply to the conduct of the children of men generally. It embraces likewise, what is intended by the expression, that “the present time only is ours.” Although, the latter is not so correct ; because poor finite man cannot claim any moment as his own. He has no power to resist its progress, nor to command its motion. The moral of these, my friends, is, to spur us on to the right improvement of the passing moments ; for that is all that we can do, and all that is required of us to do. And how is this to be performed ? By living and walking in the continual engagement of soul ; and performing our duty to God our creator, and to man our fellow creature. This comprehends the whole business of man’s life : and although we most of us agree with these short sentences,—yet, alas ! we as generally neglect an attention to them. We let the moments go out of our hands, without even recollecting

they are passing. We are putting off for a future time, that which should be done instantaneously; to be done to-morrow, and to-morrow,—and to-morrow seldom comes.

There are ten thousand times ten thousand ways, in which the children of men are walking, different from the true way; for almost every rational creature has his own way. This is the case with every one whose way is not God's way, but who have ways of their own. There can be but one right way, among the many thousands;—but one way that leads to life.

A simile has presented itself to my mind, which appears to me very plain; and I have often been led to view this subject, like the lines drawn from the centre of a circle. You know, my friends, that from the centre of a circle, thousands and tens of thousands of lines may be drawn, and yet they all vary a little, one from the other; and notwithstanding, at the first setting out, the variation is hardly perceptible, in those nearest the true line, still among all these varied lines, there is but one that leads to the true centre where God is, and where God only can be worshipped. And this is a strait and narrow way, to flesh and blood. It opposes the creature, in all his working will,—in all his indulgences, and his varied and many propensities, and desires, to deviate from the true order. So that, although some may seem desirous of

walking in the straight path, yet they deviate for want of keeping in that self-abasement—in that state, in which they were created, and placed here, as creatures of God, to do his will only.

We will have something of our own ; and let this be never so small a matter, it is like the next line to the true one, and leads off wider and wider till it becomes considerable, at a more advanced period of it.

So it is, my friends, we love to profess ;—we love the name of things, better than the substance. How often have I observed, the small term, religion, made use of for very vicious purposes : and how many thousands there are, who make a profession, and yet know not what it means. They have no true sense of what was intended, by those who gave it that term. It is the tie which unites the soul of man to its maker ; and therefore it consists wholly and completely, in the full self-abasement of the creature, without attempting to judge for himself ; but waiting to know the will of God concerning him,—and then to do it. As this becomes the concern of our minds, my friends, we begin to understand the term and what it means.

The righteous God loveth righteousness ; and would lead all his rational creation, in the way of it ; the straight and narrow way that leads to him and eternal life. But, under the term of

religion, how many are walking in utter darkness! How many are walking in all the devious paths that I have mentioned! It may be, that all but one of the ten thousand, are deviating a little from the true way, some more and some less, till they come round the whole circle. Some are in direct opposition to the right way; direct antipodes. As you know, that from the centre of a circle, two lines may be drawn one directly opposite to the other.

Let me explain a little. I consider those, who make a great profession of religion, but who undertake to learn it by the letter;—who undertake to learn it in schools of science and seminaries of learning, these are those who stand the antipodes of the true way, and in direct opposition to the will of God their creator: for they begin, as our first parents did, by turning aside from God. They began, by attempting to climb up into the tree of knowledge, and to partake of the fruit, and to judge for themselves in opposition to their Creator, as if they had a right to judge for themselves. And what can be more unjust than to presume, to act any thing out of the will of our Creator, preserver, and blesser. Here is the first act; and a great act of injustice indeed it is. For we find by the testimony of the Scriptures, from what this temptation arose. It arose from a desire after knowledge, which is stamped upon the immortal soul of man. It was requisite,

that the Creator should stamp this desire upon the soul, that man should have a desire after right knowledge. He not only impressed that desire upon the rational soul of his creature man; but at the same time limited the desire, and set bounds to it. He fixed it with bounds, like the sands of the sea shore, where all its billows were to be stopped. One of the boundaries was, that he should not climb up into the tree of knowledge,—not presume to learn any thing himself, but wait to be instructed by God his creator; because all was comprehended in him. He was not to demand or require it, but wait to receive it in God's own blessed way.

Oh! that we might understand the scriptures as we read! But we cannot understand them, only as we dwell in the light. If we dwell in the light, here it is that we can read them as we ought to read them. Here man can see whereby he became a transgressor, by deviating from the Divine command, and attempting to obtain knowledge through an improper medium. The temptation having inspired a degree of desire, beyond right bounds, hereby it was that we transgressed, by eating of the tree of knowledge, and becoming as Gods, knowing good and evil for ourselves. Therefore, we have no need to be under the control of the Creator any longer. We have the control of ourselves as men and creatures, in our fallen and

separated state from the divine harmony. Here now, this is plain to every one of us.

Well, what have we to do, my friends? We are to turn back again. And what mercy he has manifested to us individually, in our own souls. We need not go to books nor to men; for he that made us, is graciously with us. "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is he worshipped by men's hands. For in him we live, and move, and have our being;" and therefore, he is ever present, and is always willing, when we are prepared to receive, to communicate intelligence, and to instruct in Divine wisdom, as far and as fast as we can bear it. He knows the weakness of our frames;—he knows what strength is in us, and therefore deals out according to our ability to receive. All that is to be done on our part, is to remain passive—to know ourselves, like the meal, ground down to powder, as it were; having no power of our own; having nothing at our own control, not even a moment of time. Yet the passing moments are given to us, that we may be always in a state of improvement, if we will keep under right exercise. All that we have to do, is to keep every desire regulated by the standard of truth; and as we keep up this engagement, we are improving the moments as they pass. Here our improvement is all entered for us upon the credit side; we are made creditors for our

right improvement. So, on the contrary, if we neglect the proper improvement, it is placed to the debtor side. It is a common maxim, and a good one, that “short reckonings make long friends.” If it was only our care every day of our lives, to look over the actions of the day, and see how our accounts stand with our Creator, how greatly should we be benefitted by this self-examination!

Would not a prudent book keeper, if he did right, bring up his debt and credit every night, that he might know how things stood? Then how much more so, in the business of salvation, ought we to endeavour to improve every moment of the passing time, from day to day, and never let an evening pass over, without looking over, and turning over the leaf, to see where the balance would strike, whether in favour or against. If it be against us, let us double our diligence the succeeding day, to retrieve our lost time. Let us strive to have a balance in our favour from season to season, and from day to day. If this were our concern—although we were not joined in society, with any profession of religion—were these our engagements, all would be well; all these would become one, and make that society, which is the only militant church on earth. However scattered, they would feel for one another, and whenever they passed by one another, they would be impressed by the

one spirit to become one body, and made to drink into the one spirit.

This I call religion ; but I consider no profession of religion, to be religion at all.

There is another way in which it may be divided into a thousand parts ;—that is, by depending on the labours of our fore-fathers—depending on the labours of our friends, not concerned to do our own work faithfully.***** Because, why, my friends ? When we reflect as wise men and women, and look back to past ages, we discover, that it was a long time before man so far deviated as to go down into that state of total darkness ; as we read in the scriptures, “**death reigned from Adam to Moses.**” That is, death reigned over all the children of men from the time they entered into Adam’s state, by doing as he did, in eating of the tree—by climbing up into the tree of knowledge, and presuming to take for themselves. Death reigned from that time down to the giving of the law by Moses, and the covenant to Israel. So it has been with every individual of us. Death has reigned from Adam, in every one of our souls, till the Lord Almighty, by his light and grace, struck up a law in our souls—a light that discovers the darkness. Have we not known it in a degree ? But have we been faithful ? Not more so, I apprehend, than Israel. They had a simple law suited to their degraded state ; and how soon

they deviated!—and how easy was it for them to comply! And what would have been their portion, had they been faithful? The fruits of a good outward land. It was an external covenant, and therefore, their reward was outward and external.

Now we are called with a more holy calling. We are called to a new covenant dispensation, in which the law of light unfolds itself in our souls, and gives us a sense of our desolate condition. If we love the light, let us bring our deeds to the light, that they may be reproved; that it may be manifested whether they are wrought of God. This is the work of God to his creature man; and this is the sole business of man on earth; for it is only as he attends to the law of life that he understands to do the will of his heavenly Father, and his duty to his fellow creature. This law and spirit of life in Christ Jesus, it teaches a morality, that the outward law never taught—a morality which stands in the power of the Holy One—by which we are taught our duty to God our creator, and to man our fellow creature; which, we are conscious, none can do, but by the aid and power of the wisdom of God—his light and life in our souls. Therefore, for the want of coming into this, they remain in the old letter, “eye for eye, railing for railing, stripe for stripe, and life for life.” But see now, when we come into the gospel state what is taught in-

stead of retaliation ; “ resist not evil ; if any one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also : And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” Now this is a law that we do not love, nor cannot, as long as we are selfish creatures. As long as we prize ourselves above our neighbours, we cannot come up to the golden rule : we cannot love our neighbours as ourselves, till we come under the control and influence of this divine law, which is full of life, full of light, and full of power to enable the soul to perform all that the Almighty requires of it.

Let us turn our back upon all letter religion—turn right about: for those who are seeking religion out of books, in colleges and schools, they are antipodes,—in direct opposition to God Almighty, and his ways : and so in proportion, as we are more or less in the letter, we deviate from the true line. How many are there who have not come to the direct point? Here it is, that death reigns, and darkness covers the soul of man, while we are seeking Heaven by our own understanding, and by our creaturely science; by the writings and experience of good men in former ages. Yet the letter of the scriptures condemns them : they are going in direct opposition to all their testimony. This is evident, when we attend to the conclusive argument of the apostle of the Gentiles ; who thus

exclaimed, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Will we, then, in opposition to this argument, presume to say that the Spirit of God is in the letter; that we can be taught the Spirit of God by the letter. The letter is nothing but an effect, it is not any cause. We must come back to that self-existent principle which was before all things—which created all things. We must come back to that God in our own souls, dwelling in us; for Jesus declares “the kingdom of God is within you,” not out of you, but in the secret of our own souls. But he only in his own pleasure makes himself manifest. When the creature waits in humble prostration, then it is that he comes forth in the power of his majesty, to mollify the soul, and to bring it into humiliation. Now it wants only a moment to see, that all Christendom are going in direct opposition to the scriptures; there is not a soul of them hardly going right,—speaking in a general way; but I trust, that as formerly, there may be here one and there one—one of a family and two of a

tribe. But alas, alas! must we not all, more or less, plead guilty. We are out of the true path—we are out of the true line. There is something of self remaining; and as long as it remains we are out of the true way, and as we go on, we shall be farther and farther from it. I therefore, call on you, my friends, in love; and I am willing to take part with you—I am willing to plead guilty among you, that there has not been a coming up to the law which Christ Jesus requires of us, that enters us into the narrow gate; a strait gate, and narrow way. Well how are we to get back? The way is plain and simple, we don't want to go to colleges, to schools, to books, or to men. We must never look for the way without us. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Jesus declared, when he was outwardly present as a teacher and Messiah to Israel. They did not look any higher. He was their director, their saviour. He it was, that saved them from their outward sicknesses. He was only an outward saviour that healed their outward diseases, and gave them strength of body, to enjoy that outward good land. This was a figure of the great Comforter, which he would pray the Father to send them; an inward one, that would heal all the diseases of their souls, and cleanse them from all their inward pollutions: that thing of God, that thing of eternal life. It was the soul that wanted salvation: but

this no outward saviour could do, no external saviour could have any hand in it. It was altogether inward; for as God is a spirit invisible to all our external senses, he is incomprehensible to all rational creatures. The work must be by some secret thing in the soul, and every one to whom it is communicated has a soul in which it dwells. Therefore, as the law was given to Israel—they were all servants to Pharaoh in Egypt. Their outward law was one, their salvation one, their deliverer one, outwardly saving them from outward bondage who believed in him. The law of the spirit of life in me, is not the law of the spirit of life in my brother or sister, whose bondage here may be different, or differs from mine. We, therefore, each require a peculiar law to ourselves, as that was a peculiar law to that people, and to no others. Here, this was a type of the inward divine law, under the new covenant dispensation; when it shall no longer be said to a neighbour, “know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest” of them. Therefore, we must not look for a law that has been in another man’s mind; that would be no law to us. If any part of our experience, when we attend to the law written in our own hearts, is similar to what a brother or sister has experienced, there may be encouragement and confirmation derived from their experience. But the Lord is too kind, to send

us away for instruction. He is every where present, a schoolmaster to every soul.

And why does he raise up teachers? some may say. The reason is plain;—although the letter has directed us to that law, and nothing else can teach us, we flee from it; and therefore, he is raising up instruments, outwardly, and clothing them with power, who are willing to give up their lives for his testimony sake, and his cause sake, and for the sake of their beloved fellow creatures. These do not call them to themselves, but home to the pure witness in their own souls. We know that God Almighty has placed a witness in every soul, to witness for him, and to be a light and a leader. Therefore, all that we can do, is to bring to your recollection, that there is a place where you can flee to—that we may all partake of the life that was in Jesus Christ, for “in him was life and the life was the light of men.”

Therefore, it is testified by these words that the true light is dispensed to every rational creature, in proportion to what the Almighty requires of him. He had it in the fulness—all that was necessary for him to complete the work which he had to do. But he could have nothing superfluous: for it cannot be supposed that the Almighty Jehovah, deals in superfluities to any of his rational creation. But he dispenses to every man a proportion designed to enable him

to fill up and complete his work according to the will of his heavenly Father.

Now, so long as we keep aloof from this principle in our own souls, we are alienated from God ; and are travelling on in some of the devious paths which lead away from the true one. Let us lay aside every sin that so easily besets us ;—let us turn to the divine light and Comforter in our own souls. His ways are plain, and we cannot misunderstand him. It is only a light from Heaven, that can show us the way to Heaven. He is truth, and he is light ; and, therefore, he it is, that is to be our teacher ;—“He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” Why then do we make images ? For should we at any time, form an image of that power that is to be our saviour and deliverer, we become idolators ; we centre in idolatry, as much as those who worship idols of gold.

Oh ! that men of science might be aware what a curse they are to the inhabitants of the earth ; what a great curse. But they will not believe it till they turn to this Comforter—this Spirit of truth that leads into all truth.

The apostle who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, was instructed in all the knowledge that was taught in his days—except the heathen sciences, which it is likely were forbidden in great measure,—and yet he had to count it all as dross and dung, that he might win a

better thing—that he might win Christ—win that anointing, which means Christ; that divine anointing, the unction the apostle speaks of: “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie.” Human science may not be altogether fruitless, it may be of some use in the present state; and yet it is a matter of great doubt to me, whether it does not shut up the way to higher knowledge. It seems to limit the Holy One. For although he is continually with us, we must go to look in books of science and morality, to know what his will is respecting us, and our duty to him and to our fellow creatures.

Is there any morality in all the books of morality which will enable us to do our duty? No, there is no such thing. All the moral laws on earth fall short of helping us to do our duty to God and to our fellow creatures: and they will remain inadequate; because, if they do not, they will take away the honour from God, and attribute it to the creature. He that made man knows man, and can teach him his duty better than man can know it, by any search in all the books of religion and morality. They all lead men into a labyrinth, till they frequently cannot tell which way to get out again; a labyrinth by which they are lost. Oh! that we might come

to a right view of the divine character!—that we might come to believe what we profess to believe; that God is perfectly wise in his works, infinite in wisdom, in justice, in mercy, and in goodness: and that every thing excellent is combined in the Holy One, and that the Holy One is manifested in every rational soul. All science, all knowledge is comprehended in that Holy One.

And here his light is in all of us, and our duty is clearly manifested to us without the aid of books or men. Shall we, then, go out to them to learn our duty? No, God forbid, that we should act so inconsistent a part! Let us try this thing a little, and see if we are not casting an indignity upon the Almighty, to suppose that we are to go about in search of an instructor in the things of morality and religion. As to our mechanical things, and other useful sciences, a suitable attention to them may be proper: but to go to schools of science to learn morality—to learn the ways of wisdom, it is casting an indignity on him, as we centre back into the state of the Gentile nations. They considered that God had so departed from them that he was not known at all, and so they worshipped unknown Gods.

So now, to what but an unknown God do Christendom direct their worship at the present day?

Can man by his learning, be supposed to know God? Can he be supposed to know how

to worship him when he sets out to study it out of his own brain? It is a worship to unknown Gods; because they are not in the light and spirit, but in the letter. Self reigns and rules: it is merely for popularity and aggrandizement; the popularity and praise of men; like the high professors of old. All their works were done to be seen of men. Then let us beware; let us sink deep into ourselves. For if holy Job, who had been living such a righteous life before the Almighty, could bear such testimony concerning himself, he could not have arrived at that perfection, of which he was capable; for when he came to behold the most high, he cast himself down and abased himself.

Oh! that this might be our lot, and I am persuaded by the light, that if christendom were brought to see God as they ought, they would be led to abhor themselves. Oh! that the Almighty might rise with his power, and give us a sense of these things; and give us an engagedness to rally to the standard, and leave all these hypocritical things in religion. Let us come to be children again; we must come to it. We have gone out of the child's state, we have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We must tread back our steps; there is no cross road: though the lines seem so nigh together, it will not do to step over from one to the other. This will be man's way. We must go back to the point from which we started—to the

place where Jehovah has placed us in our first state, when we came innocent out of his holy hands.

We have departed from this state, and we must go back to it; we must come to that child-like state, where we shall have no contrivance or judgment of our own: for even Jesus, our pattern, in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away. So it must be with us, when we are brought to that child's state, under humiliation, from a sense of our sins: our judgments must be taken away, and we must wait for him to be our God, our teacher, and our king—receiving all from his mouth.

And thus, all those who have but one leader, and one guide, are united in one holy bond, they feel one another in it, however they may be scattered; and it is those who will make up the innumerable multitude from all nations, tongues, and kindreds. None but those who have gone back to this child-like state, and put off the old man with his deeds, and crucified the man of sin and son of perdition—in whom self has become annihilated, can be brought to a condition, in which they can love their neighbours as themselves, and pray to God for them with a sincere desire and love.

This is the only way; and when this is the case, all will be peace and good will among men; because wars will cease; the root will be dug

out. It is now the time, that the axe should be laid to the root of the tree: for every branch that bringeth not forth good fruit, must be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Can it be a good tree that supports contention? It cannot be a good tree, and therefore it must be cut down. Can it be a good tree that excites a spirit of retaliation? It cannot be good; it must be cut down by the gospel axe. All war, and the spirit of it, must be annihilated. If it stands in selfishness, it is not a creature of God; for sin is nothing of his creation. Man has created all the evil in the world; he is the author of it all; and when he is willing to give it all up to the hammer and word of God, it will be annihilated and cast out into the ocean of oblivion. Oh! that every soul might witness this; that every species of selfishness might be rooted out and burnt up by the fire of divine love, so as to be entirely annihilated; for until then, we cannot love our neighbour as ourselves, and our creator above all. This is a great truth: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” He that learns his nature can see God and know him: but till self is eradicated from individuals and from societies, they cannot love God. He will not commune with us face to face, agreeably with that view of the prophet, “Cease to do evil,

learn to do well, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow :" Then, and not till then, " come and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel," the consequence is fatal.

It seems as though I could not avoid speaking of the wonderful deliverance which we shall experience, if we attain to this love and good will toward one another. How soon we can then calculate the bondage and fruitless labour which we are now doing to support war, to make instruments of war, and preparations for defence. What cruel oppression and bondage ! Here, now, if we come into the spirit of the gospel we shall " beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks :" we shall not lift up sword against one another, nor learn war any more. See what a wonderful deliverance this will be ! But when we turn to these seminaries of learning, what do we discover ? War is a cruel scourge ; but I was almost a mind to say, that priest-craft is a more cruel scourge. See what a burden it is, and what toil is required to support it ! It is that which leads to wars and tumults, in a great measure ; it is that which

creates the spirit of war. We see ministers of the same profession, in contending armies, venture to pray to the same God for the success of their arms. How hateful the view! How can we shut our eyes to such inconsistencies! Can we suppose it possible, that the God of wisdom will ever listen to the prayers of such creatures as these, who dare thus venture to raise their voices to him! God forbid;—it is casting the greatest indignity upon him that man is capable of doing. Oh! let us learn, by the things we suffer. My soul travails with a desire for my fellow creatures. Oh! may we look to these things: may we apply it individually. It must be done by individuals; for individuals make nations, and nations carry on war; and by the labour and exercise of individuals, war must be put an end to. Are we not all impeachable—are we not worthy of being scourged, for the part we have taken, in the oppression of our fellow creatures? Thousands and tens of thousands have been forbid the enjoyment of every good thing on earth, even of common school-learning; and must it still be so? God forbid it. But this would be a trifle, if they had the privilege of rational beings on the earth; that liberty which is the greatest of all blessings,—the exercise of free agency. And here we are glutting ourselves with the toils of their labour!

Let us all lay this to heart ; let us, individually, come up to the principle of perfect justice, "Cease to do evil and learn to do well, plead for the widow, relieve the oppressed;" and we shall do tenfold more than all the governments of the earth, toward putting an end to slavery and oppression.

But this noble testimony, of refusing to partake of the spoils of oppression, lies with the dearly beloved young people of this day. We can look for but little from the aged, who have been accustomed to these things.

I can look back and remember well, when one among my brethren, I laboured to put an end to this slavery ; and what hard work it was to convince the aged. How unwilling they were to comply with any thing but that which they had been long inured to, and which had become to them like second nature. They looked back and saw, that good men before them had done the same thing ; and, said they, shall we think to be better than they were. This was for the want of considering, that such was the darkness of the children of men, that no one generation has arrived at perfection. There is as much to be done by each generation, as has been done by the one which preceded it : because in the same proportion as we advance in reformation, the way is open for greater advancement. The primitive disciples were far from a state of perfection,

otherwise an apostacy could not have entered. They were brought out of darkness, as far as their case would admit. So with our primitive Friends, they did their day's work faithfully; but how far short did they come! Therefore, if we rest in their labours we are going back; for every generation has a work to do, in addition to the previous one. If we do nothing more, we spend our time in vain.

Oh! may we be aroused to faithfulness, and not look back or forward beyond the light. Keep close up to it; keep close to God, and he will lead us on in righteousness, by which we shall be enabled to strengthen one another's hands, and rejoice together in love, and thank him and take courage, who is over all God blessed for ever.

SERMON IV.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, GREEN STREET,
PHILADELPHIA, ON 5th DAY, SECOND OF TWELFTH MONTH,
1824.

MAN is made for society. This is not only evident from the nature of man in all ages and nations, but it is self evident to the comprehension of every rational being; as from our childhood we discover, that it is not good for man to dwell alone. Should any one presume to have an entire independence of his fellow men, and live by himself, standing aloof from all sociability and intercourse with others, he must be one of the most unhappy creatures upon the face of the earth. Even the trees of the wood would exceed him; for, by their branches, which intertwine, they defend one another from the storms that surround them. Now, if this be the case, my friends, that the divine wisdom has made and constituted us social beings, then certain obligations will attach to us individually, and strictly, as it regards one another; and these obligations must be mutually fixed upon an equality, coincident with our equal standing in this state of being.

For we have but one common Creator; and he

has made of one flesh and blood, all the families that dwell upon the face of the earth. He never could have designed, that there should be any superiority among the children of men, which should set one above another. For as he was their universal Creator, so he was their common Creator, and he intended to be their common Father, and that we all should be brethren together. Even as Jesus declared to his disciples, who were looking up to him as their only teacher, “Ye have but one master, and all ye are brethren.” Now in order to support this social intercourse, and to maintain it upon its right ground, so that we may be mutually happy together; there is but one way for us to do,—but one way in which it can be effected: and that is, for us, equally alike, every one of us, to recollect, that we have but one common Creator, and that if we are born again of God, we must have one common Father.

It was never designed by the Almighty, that there should be kings and arbitrary governors among the children of men. These things are the effect of man’s transgression; they all arise out of the fall of man. We see how hateful it was, in the sight of the Most High, when Israel rejected him as their leader and commander, and desired a king, that they might be like the nations of the earth who had fallen away from God. They were many minded, and wanted to view

the blessedness of that glorified state, that Almighty Goodness had intended for his creature man in the creation. How my spirit is bowed in sorrow, at viewing the present state of man; so very far distant is he from that state. Had he been faithful to the divine command; had he been always willing to be taught of God; then, that which only makes society comfortable—makes society happy to us, would have been preserved to us continually, through all ages and generations. That is, perfect unity and perfect love: For those who dwell in God, dwell in love, and are preserved in unity; a unity that nothing can disturb but our own misconduct.

Well now, my dear friends, consider the design of all these religious meetings, and all our religious exercises; they are to bring us back to a sight of our wretched condition, and to lead us to search for our eternal good: and this must be an individual work, we cannot do it one for another. No one can save his brother, nor give a ransom for his soul. No man can give his brother faith or belief that can do him any good. We must receive it from God, or it will be worth nothing; and, therefore, as we are all equal, when we rightly consider the subject, we cannot presume to have any right or authority one over another, to impose upon another a belief or any thing like it. We must leave all to the Lord.

Well, then, what is it that is to preserve us in this state? The same that preserved our great pattern, in the innocent life, in which he was created and brought forth, taking a part of our common nature, and an earthly body. I say there is nothing that can bring us to this, nor preserve us in a right state and condition, but that which preserved him; and of which we have so clear an account, in the history of his life and mission. In his childhood, he was perfect in innocence;—free from all kinds of defilement, as man was created in the beginning, and so it might have been, with all that God created, as the scripture declaration proves. They were made innocent, undefiled, and unpolluted: but without knowledge, and without any capacity to obtain knowledge through any other medium than their Creator. They were endowed with a capacity to receive it from him, as a teacher, but no capacity to obtain true knowledge independently of their Creator.

This I consider to be the state of man in the beginning; and of every child when born into the world.

God said, “let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness.” And how was he made? As to his animal form and frame, he was made of the dust of the earth; “for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” Now, this was in relation to his animal body, which is

composed of the dust, and to dust returns, as is self-evident to all of us.

But wherein was he constituted the image of the Holy One? He placed in this animal body a portion of his own spirit; for there is but one self-existing Spirit: eternal and self-existing, comprehends all power, all wisdom, all goodness; and every thing must be attributed to him by man. And, therefore, to be in the image of God, we must partake of his own nature;—and have a portion of his own blessed spirit, to animate the soul and make it immortal, as God is immortal. Here we see him having the sole control of the body; and, therefore, the body was made in a beautiful shape, and stood erect upon the earth. The soul was within, and the body was subject to it;—it acted no part which was not consistent with the divine will. Every act must have been righteous. As man was made in the image of God, every act would be a righteous act. But from this happy state man fell—from this blessed condition, we all fell—for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and, therefore, stand in need of being born again.

Here we find, from the testimony of the scriptures, that the child Jesus, grew in stature, and in favour with God and man; “and the grace of God was upon him.” And what was this grace, my friends? Why the apostle tells us,

“in him was life, and the life was the light of men;” and “that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” All then, have received grace: all have received a portion of the light of God in their souls, as without it, none could answer the end of their creation: every one, according to the measure that God was pleased to dispense to him. And he will always do it in equal justice; just in proportion to the need of the creature, to effect the end of his creation; for he has a just balance and weight for every thing; therefore, all is adjusted in his infinite wisdom, by his power and goodness.

Here now, we hear nothing of the child Jesus, till he was thirty years of age; when he appeared unfolding the righteous law of that dispensation, and finishing all the outward shadows. He declared, “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” He now had fulfilled it, when he went into the last institute of his Father belonging to that outward, shadowy dispensation; and hereby he justified his heavenly Father, in giving the law and covenant to Israel; although they had broken it, and deviated so far from it. Here it was proved self-evidently clear, that they might have obeyed and complied with it. Here we see by this, he had conferred a portion of grace upon every one, sufficient to enable them

to fulfil the law. It is impossible to suppose, that the Almighty Goodness should have given a law to us, which it was not in our power to perform. This we cannot conceive ; because he is righteous in all his ways, and just in all his works toward the children of men. Here we learn, what was man's duty in the beginning. Here we learn how he might have effected the end of his creation, without transgression. We have it in the example of the child Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, and clothed with a body of flesh and blood, and like us, endowed with an immortal spirit : for nothing can become a son, or a child of God, but a rational, an immortal spirit. We learn nothing of any being sons of God, who are not thus born of God, through his life-giving presence in the soul. This is confirmed, by the experience of former ages ; and we have it expressed in the testimony of the apostle of the Gentiles : “ For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Here now, we see, Jesus was made lower than the angels ; having a fleshly body, that could suffer death upon the earth : and here we see him living a holy life, through the operation of the spirit of God in his soul. When he had fulfilled the law, and completed the work of that dispensation ; and as he came up out of the water, the Holy spirit descended upon him like a dove.

Here he was prepared for a greater mission; for a more evangelical, a more righteous, and a more holy dispensation—to do away the old law and bring in a new covenant and law. The former being outward, external, and carnal; the latter being inward and spiritual. The first, having the law written upon tables of stone outwardly, and open to the external view of the animal man. The second written upon the heart, and invisible to all the external senses of the creature man. It cannot be read through any external medium. He was now prepared to receive this additional power, which is necessary for every one before he can become the true child of God; as nothing but being led by the spirit of God, can make a son of God.

The first birth was a created birth; the last was a birth of love, of union; and it was a birth of communion, by the soul entering into a marriage covenant, with the Lord its God. This is the way in which the new birth is brought about. The soul must enter into a covenant with the Lord Almighty; and become as a wife, always subject to her heavenly husband, and always under his direction. This we see, by the parable of Jesus Christ concerning the kingdom of God. “Behold the kingdom of God is within you.” It is the holy descending of the life of God in the soul;—God is always in his kingdom, that is in the soul; and although contained in a small com-

pass, it is like a little seed, a small seed, invisible to the outward and external senses ; and discovered only by the soul ; and when the soul is animated by divine light, it begins to feel the stirring of this divine seed. It may be so very small, as to be scarcely discovered, unless we are very attentive to its operation ; and we may be led to reason as Nathaniel did concerning Jesus : “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Can this little manifestation be of any value to us? Oh, yes! we must acknowledge,—we shall be compelled to acknowledge its mighty power in one day. If we will not bow to it in mercy, we must bow to it in judgment. It is like a light to the soul which quickens it ; and which nothing else can do. It brings the evidence with it, and strikes up a light in the soul. Although it may in the first view point only to a single transgression ; yet that which it does point to, is not lost sight of, because it brings an evidence, so that the soul cannot rise up and escape. It feels guilty, and stands convicted of its guilt ; because it knows by the light that shines in it, that it might have done right, when it has done wrong. Nothing else can make an immortal soul feel guilty at all, but an absolute knowledge, that it has transgressed against this light, this kingdom of God in itself. And here, as we are prepared for it, so in proportion shall we grow in grace. And if we are

faithful to the beginning of grace in the heart, we shall grow in grace and in the saving knowledge of God.

This, every true believer, every true child of God knows by every day's experience ; and here as we attain to this, it leads us on till we fulfil our duty to our fellow creatures. This is the first table ; because if we do not love one another, we cannot love God, nor know him.

Therefore the first stirrings of grace leads us to feel what we are ; to feel our sympathies, our antipathies, and our duties to one another, which the sense of our society with one another, brings upon us. The sense that we are social beings, here attaches to us. Here the Lord begins with us as with children. Yea, such is his mercy that "a bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench : till he brings forth judgment unto truth." Yea, and the obedient "Isles shall wait for his law."

Oh ! that we might gather to this eternal principle—this seed of God in our own souls ; it would give us all power to accomplish every purpose that God intended for his creature man. Oh ! how it will grow, as Jesus has so beautifully pointed out in the parable. We must all become passive : for unless we become passive, this seed of God, this light of God which is alive in man, can never enliven us, or change our foul nature. For unless we are thus passive, it is not in the

God of our salvation to force us into happiness. The very term shows an inconsistency, that no rational mind can agree with: because no free agent creature can be forced into happiness, by any power in heaven or in earth. No, he leads; he invites; he intreats; he waits long, to be gracious to the children of men. He renews his visitation; he repeats his persuasions. And mind it, my friends, he calls to every description of rational creatures; and especially to the dearly beloved youth, whose temptations are many and great. Oh! may we all learn the word of command within. Oh! may we follow after the stirrings of this light of God in our souls; that quickens the soul, and gives it a sense of its condition —that opens and displays the way to righteousness. His call has gone forth to the ends of the earth;—all have heard, but all have not obeyed.

Now in this light, this seed of God, there is unity; but out of it there is no unity in heaven or in earth. Every thing that stands out of this light, is in that contentiousness which is calculated to spoil society; to break the bonds of union: for you know that the strength of social beings depends upon their unity. What else is there to bind them, but the light and love of God in their souls; that love that is stronger than death? When a soul has this love he would rather die than wound another: yea, he would rather give up his life than to offend. For this

love can do all things—can bear all things: it leads to all charity, and charity hopeth all things, endureth all things, and overcometh all things. Though all the men on the earth,—all mankind, should rise up to war against it, yet it remains the same—unchangeable. We would still wish them all well, use charity to all, and give praise to God for all.

This is that blessed state into which we are all brought, by an obedience to that seed of God in our hearts; that love which he sheds abroad in our souls, to mollify our hearts, and fill us with his goodness. For in this it is we love all, and are ready to bless all, as he does. He causes the rain to descend upon the evil and the good, and the sun to shine upon all. His goodness and mercy endureth for ever. Oh! that we might come to it!—What a blessed state it is!

When we feel the power of divine love, it dispels all clouds. Though Pharaoh and his people be shrouded in darkness, yet the soul that is brought under the influence of the power of love comes to see a Goshen continually; a land of peace, where nothing can interrupt or annoy. And this is what some of the holy ancients had a view of, and a foretaste of; and yet, they could not come to the full enjoyment of it, as social beings. No, that was left for a higher dispensation; till the soul should be brought into a cove-

uant with God Almighty, and when they should have the law written in the heart.

David had a view of this state, when he thus exclaimed, “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard ; that went down to the skirts of his garments ; as the dew of Hermon, and like the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

Dearly beloved friends, and fellow mortals, I feel no distinction, you feel all alike to me ; for I am no sectarian : I want to banish all such distinctions out of the world. I am sure, that if we come to this holy principle, all these names of Balaam, would be banished and forgotten, and never heard of more. When we come into this eternal principle of love, we shall love one another with a pure, a righteous, and undefiled love, that nothing can shake. What ! shall the sin of a fellow creature shake us ? Shall we be moved because he may be carried away by strong temptations ? No. It is hard enough for him to bear the punishment of his own transgression ;--and shall we try to heap more upon him ? No, my friends, let us try to alleviate his pains, by calling him home to the light within him, which alone can redeem him from the state into which he has brought himself. We cannot

give him faith or belief; but we can recommend him in the right way, when we have experienced it ourselves. We can recommend him home to this holy principle; and assure him, that if he will abide in it, it will deliver him from all trouble.

It is in this that the children of God feel one another; it is in this they become established; for God's children are all taught of the Lord, and in righteousness are they established, "and great is the peace of these children." Oh! happy state! What hinders, my friends? Are we afraid of being happy too soon? Is heaven of so little value to us, that we are willing to put it off, till the day of our death? And shall we fill up our time in enjoying and gratifying ourselves in the wretched pleasures of an earthly life, which is misery in its best estate? No; God forbid it!

If a state of heaven is the only happy state, why not strive to seek it above all? Can we enjoy it too soon? No, my friends. And we never can enjoy it till we are willing to come into a condition suitable for it. Nothing can bring us into this condition, but as we give heed to the light of the spirit of God in our souls; and in proportion as we attend to the Comforter within us. Jesus declared he would send a Comforter; the same holy spirit which descended upon him,

after his watery baptism—the same spirit, he said, would be poured down upon them.

Oh ! my dearly beloved friends, may we realize these things in ourselves, for unless we do, we cannot understand them aright. And yet how simple and plain, if we were willing to try the matter. We have not come into a right state ; we have not believed in this teacher that leads into all truth, because we love our own ways better. But there is nothing else; we know of nothing by which we can bring it to the test, put it side by side, and see the contrast. We are too generally pursuing the things of the world ; and in a worldly spirit, leaving God and happiness, for vain and temporal things ; some in adding field to field, and house to house ; and some in adding pounds to pounds, and dollars to dollars : delighting themselves and one another in vain and cruel pursuits. I say cruel, for what bondage do we bring our fellow creatures into.

Now the door is open for captives to come out ; to come home to the counsel of Jesus, and turn inward to the spirit of truth, the light and life of God in the soul. This is the only saviour and deliverer for the children of men, that was ever known to deliver any one since the fall of man.

Here we have what the apostle calls Christ within : and Oh ! that we might come to the

same righteous spirit that he was in ; the true image of his righteousness brought about by the same power of light and life. For the wisdom and power of God in the soul of man, is the only thing that can save the soul. When we look to the substance, it is this spirit and wisdom of God displayed in the children of men, that is the saviour of men. It is no outward work, for no outward thing can touch the soul ; it has no connexion with it ; for God is a spirit and they that worship him, must do it in spirit and in truth. They who are his children must be spiritual. No clods of earth can be made a child of God. The body is a tabernacle for the spirit while in a state of probation, in which it can grow up out of this state, into a state of divine knowledge and fitness to become a son of God, and an inhabitant of the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, we shall shake off all these clods of mortality by and by. What a blessed thing will it be, when this time shall come, and our souls shall be clothed upon, with that which is a durable covering. He will clothe all his repenting children with his spirit, the only adornment fit for the child of God. It is compared to white linen that the multitude were formerly seen clothed in. Now what was this intended to represent ? It was an emblem of that pure covering which is the righteousness of saints. Now this is all that is wanting, my friends. The righte-

ous God loveth righteousness ; and he calls for it at our hands ;—and what is righteousness but obedience to the leading and influence of his spirit in our souls, that teaches us what is good and what is evil ; and enables us to do good and be faithful to all men as God has done by us.

We are on a level with all the rest of God's creatures. We are not better for being white, than others for being black ; and we have no more right to oppress the blacks because they are black, than they have to oppress us because we are white. Therefore, every one who oppresses his coloured brother or sister is a tyrant upon the earth ; and every one who strengthens the hand of an oppressor, is a tyrant upon earth. They have turned from God, and have not that powerful love, which does away all distinction and prejudice of education, and sets upon equal grounds all those that have equal rights. Therefore every one that strengthens the hand of the oppressor, is a tyrant ; for every one who oppresses is a tyrant, just in proportion as he does so : and I leave this subject for you to judge. I am not charging you, my friends, with being tyrants ; but I am telling you what makes a tyrant, that you may look as in a glass, or a mirror, and know what you are in the sight of God, who loveth all and is ready to bless all. For he hath made of one flesh and one blood all the families of the earth, and given them

liberty, which he intended they should exercise equally alike. He never intended that one should lord it over another; and every one that does it is a tyrant.

Now this will bring us nearer together, if we exercise our understandings rightly. Because there is but one God; and his love is alike extended to all, and that is the alone thing that can lead us aright, and when we agree in this, every thing else is nothing to us. When we dwell in this love, and this little seed of God in our souls, we dwell in God, and God is love; and if we dwell in love, we dwell in God and God in us. Here now as we dwell in this love, our works will make it manifest that we dwell in him; "for by their fruits," says Jesus, "ye shall know them." If we oppress our fellow creatures, we give the lie to our profession; for we say that we believe in this light in the soul, and at the same time oppress our fellow creatures, or strengthen the hands and encourage those who do so; and thus give the lie to our profession in the sight of all men.

Let us then be willing to bring our deeds to the light. I dare not recommend you to any thing outward, because it would lead you off from that principle—from your soul's right instructor: it might lead you into a labyrinth where you would be lost. Therefore, I have nothing to call your attention to, but the seed of God in

your own hearts ;—to that light and life which is in you; the same that was in Jesus Christ, and which the apostle declared, was the “light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Therefore a portion of that light and life is given to all men. It is that light only which has brought men in all ages, to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

Can God oppress? Can he look upon a coloured man as mean, because he is not the same colour as others? Has he not as good a right to look upon the whites as inferior as we have to look upon the blacks? Oh! that we might rise out of this state of torpor and superstition. Oh! that we might rise above it.

Then how careful should we be not to offend. “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth.” If by taking hold of the gain of oppression, or glutting upon the fruits of slavery, we cause our brother to offend, it would be better never to eat any of these things, even if our life should fall by it: “For he that offendeth one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”

The time has come, my friends, I verily believe, that the Lord Almighty has arisen in his power; and when he will “shake, not only the

earth, (in men's hearts,) but he will shake all their heavens likewise, that that which may be shaken may be removed out of its place ; and that that which cannot be shaken may remain." And when we have seen the old heavens and the old earth pass away, then we might hope to be united together in his power ; and, if we have acquiesced in it, that he would then create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But, Oh, Justice, Justice, how thou art abused every where ! Men have it in their mouths, but their hearts are too generally far from it. Their justice is that which comports with their own selfishness ; their own gratification ; their own sensuality. Here they make justice like a nose of wax to satisfy their desires. But, as I observed, the Lord is arising, and he will shake all these false foundations : and my prayer is, that he may rise more and more in the greatness of his power, which is all-powerful in heaven and in earth. Love is stronger than death ; but Jealousy is more cruel than the grave. These two things are directly contrary to each other. Jealousy is a germ of contention in the soul, and those under the influence of this cruel principle, jealousy, are separated from God, and his love ; for they are direct antipodes to each other. Jealousy and the love of God cannot abide in the same soul, at the same

time. Oh ! that cruel thing, jealousy, what mischief it does among the children of men !

It seems as though I could hardly say enough upon this great and excellent point of justice ; because I have ever considered it the foundation of all good, and of every virtue. Without justice there can be no virtue ;—none which is not founded upon this unchangeable principle of justice. It brings us into what we cannot come into the possession and knowledge of, but as we submit to the seed of God in our own souls, —the light of God in our own spirits : and as we become willing to bow to that light, to submit to it, he will open to us a view of what justice is, and enable us to come up to it, and support it in all its parts. We must not only give opinions ; but powerful examples, by going on with it, hand in hand.

Now to apply it a little, my dear friends. What a blessing this would be to us ;—and how can we stand out any longer ! If we were just, what need would there be of all this trouble of binding one another by bonds and notes ? we should have that confidence in the righteousness and truth of our brother, that we should be willing to trust every thing in his hands, and our brother would as willingly trust us. Here we should be united. Having been brought into this blessed state, by being baptized by the one spirit into the

one body; we should have the same spirit whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, black or white, and should have confidence in one another. But for want of this justice, there is scarcely any confidence to be placed in a friend. Does not this show us every day, the miserable state in which we are, my friends. Oh! that we may not be lulled to sleep, but be engaged, and sink deep into an inquiry after the state of our own souls; and endeavour to live every moment in the right improvement of our time, so as to have the Lord continually before our eyes; then his mercy and loving kindness will rest upon us. Thus we should be able to say with one of old, "that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

Here would be an excellent state of union, communion, and social happiness. Here we should have our conversation in heaven while yet on earth; and here we should begin to feel the riches of our blessed and eternal inheritance. And the sooner the better, my friends. I say if this heaven can begin on earth, the sooner the better.

I know a little of what I say, because it brings my poor soul to experience, that all the jarrings in the world cannot jar me, because I am out of the reach of them all, while I centre under this rock of refuge: it is a mighty shelter in a weary

land, where nothing can hurt or harm in all God's holy mountain. Though the princes of the earth may set themselves, and combine together, if the Lord works in our souls it will all be cast away and come to nought.

But a little to turn now to the conclusion. What I want to impress upon us is, to feel the blessedness of love. See how it was with the poor despised Quakers in the beginning, when it was said, "See how they love one another." But what has become of these Quakers now? Are they to be found? Let us look over and search in the by-ways and paths, and see where we can find them loving one another as formerly; when it was a by-word among the people, "See the Quakers how they love one another." Why is it not so now? Nothing hinders, nothing has disturbed the holy quiet, but our losing our hold of the divine light. We have turned out of the light, and we have turned into the letter that kills and brings darkness, till we are groping in the dark, like a blind man by the wall. Were we willing to gather inward what an holy silent season we might have from day to day. Let us wait upon the Lord; seek him while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon :"

for the power of pardon is in his own hands, and he cannot be bribed to do it. He never asks pay, he asks nothing but a contrite heart and a humble spirit. The Almighty declared by his prophet, “To this man will I look; even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.” Here is the place of improvement and learning; and of communion with the **Holy One**, when the creature becomes nothing before him, and casts himself down at his holy feet, imploring his aid from time to time, and from season to season. The creature has no power of himself, to do any good thing. Oh! that we might come back into that unity and love in which men had all things in common. Oh! that we might come into the state that Friends were brought to in the beginning. They loved God and loved each other, so that they would offer themselves to be imprisoned to relieve a brother. But instead of that they would rather imprison than lead out of prison. And how easy is the way to this blessed state! Still it lies with us as individuals;—we must all do our own work. We must all do our own part by gathering inward, to that light; that seed of God, which is the kingdom of God within us.

We must come to feel its working; and still we must wait for it with patience, till the Almighty is pleased to rise up and meet us, and wait upon us. Now, as individuals, let us en-

deavour to do our particular part, in our own houses and hearts: then the work will be done; society will be brought together again, and be bound by the cords of divine love.

If the soul is possessed of this love, there is quietness. It would run like oil from vessel to vessel; and like that which was poured upon the head of the great high priest. All would feel its unction and its power. In order that we come to be subject to its operations in ourselves, we need not that any man teach us: “You have an unction from the **Holy One.**” To this I would leave and recommend every soul, with my own, as the only way to this happy experience.

There is a great work for parents and guardians of children to perform, in bringing up their offspring; but how is it neglected, my friends! I address myself to all classes among you, who are parents and guardians of children. I remember when a light lad, up and down among my friends and fellow creatures, how my soul has been grieved, to see the conduct of parents toward their children: and I have often thought what a pity it was, that they were blessed with children; since they were leading them in such a way, as would be more likely to prove their own destruction, than to render them a benefit to themselves or their friends. I have ever been

of the belief that if we “bring up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.” Oh! that this might be the belief of every parent and guardian present. But to effect this work upon our offspring, we must begin by times;—we must consider the education of our dear children, next to the salvation of our own souls; yea, equal to it in all respects. Yea, I fully believe, that if parents would begin, as soon as they discover a propensity for improvement in the child, they might control and lead them as they please; and it is the duty of every parent and guardian to begin in season. But when shall we begin? Before the child is six months old: for I have no doubt, they are capable of receiving instruction before that time; and I verily believe, that a child learns more during the first year of its life, than it learns during any other year.

Did we begin with our children early, and keep up our care constantly, our experience would prove to us the correctness of that declaration of the wise man, “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” He would become established, and no temptations would turn him aside. But alas, alas, for parents!—where is there one, —I say, where is there one, who is thus concerned to begin and travel on in this great work from day to day. Although parents cannot always

be with their children to attend them, and give them right instruction, they should improve the moments as they pass, when they are with them; and when absent, our prayers would ascend to the great Creator, that he would be over all, and supply our place. He will hear the prayer of the righteous, for the prayer of the righteous man availeth much in his sight.

Here would be a reformation indeed!—a reformation that would show itself by wonders wrought upon the rising generation. Here we should see those dear little children growing up in the simplicity of truth, like the blessed Jesus, clothed in smiles, and free from crime. All would be simple; nothing of pollution or vain desire, either in the children or the parents. If the parents were right, every little vanity would be banished, and the little ones would be brought along in the simplicity; and the way of the cross would become pleasant. The cross would become a crown, and they would love the cross, because they would begin to feel the loving kindness of a gracious God, spread over and mollifying their little minds. Because, as children live in the divine fear, and as we correct them under the power of his love, it reaches their tender minds. I know what I say, my dear friends: and, Oh! parents! parents! why are you so far behind hand? Why are you so

slothful and negligent in this great and necessary concern?

And although your parents have neglected their duty towards you, my young friends,—and a great many of you know this,—yet you know the liberties you take, and some of you know how many liberties you want to take, and that by continuing to urge your parents you weary them out ; and you know they neglect their duty. But remember that your parents, although they must answer for their own neglect and misconduct, will not have to answer for your obstinacy and unwillingness to comply with their advice.

If you will reason with yourselves, and consult your own understandings, and the light of truth in your own consciences, you will be shown the folly of gratifying the carnal mind. “ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” They all come from the hearts of evil and wicked men.

Dearly beloved young people, who have got out of the control of your parents, and are no longer subject to their government, look well to your present state ; remember the example of your blessed pattern ; and remember that the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and in righteousness are they established. “ I

beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service: and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

SERMON V.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, GERMANTOWN,
IN PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, ON FIRST DAY MORNING, 5TH
OF TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

My mind has been led, since sitting in this meeting, to renew the ancient call formerly communicated to the Lord's people:—and who are the Lord's people? Why, they are all those of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; and of every sect and profession, who are honestly and sincerely engaged to seek the Lord; to seek after a true knowledge of God and his truth. These, in all ages, are those comprehended in the expression, the Lord's people; and the knowledge of God and his truth is no where else revealed, but in the spirits and souls of the children of men. It can only be revealed inwardly by his spirit: for nothing else ever did, and nothing else ever can, reveal a true and saving knowledge of God to the children of men, but his own blessed spirit. The letter never did, and never can, reveal God and his truth, to a rational soul. Therefore, it is clear and obvious, that the declaration is true, that “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Yea, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spi-

rit of God ; for they are spiritually discerned," and only spiritually discerned, I add.

The call was on this wise delivered : " Come out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partakers with her, in her sins, lest ye be partakers also of her plagues." What is this Babylon, they were called out of ? No doubt this was expressed by way of simile, in allusion to the great and pompous city in former ages, built by the great king Nebuchadnezzar, who boasted in the greatness of his works, saying, " Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty ? " Now that mighty Babylon has long since passed away ; but there is a mystery Babylon which the apostle declared he was led to see. And he beheld her in all her works and merchandize, which consisted in all the varieties that the imagination could fancy, in every thing upon the earth ; " gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and beasts, and slaves, and the souls of men." Now mystery Babylon is fallen christendom : it makes the mystery Babylon, which the apostle beheld. And how was it built, and by what was it built ? Anti-christ is the founder of it ; and those who are deceived by his transformations, are his workmen. We read he has transformed himself into an angel of light ; and would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. But this is impossible ; for all those who elect God,

in the way that I have mentioned, by sincerely and honestly seeking God and his truth ; they have elected him for their portion, and if they have so elected him, he has elected them for his children. This makes up all of God's elect ; and these are they, whom anti-christ, with all his transformations, cannot deceive. They are built upon a foundation against which the gates of hell can never prevail. But let us a little examine, my friends, into the state of this mystery Babylon, which has grown to such great importance in the earth. Her reign was never greater than at the present day ;—her merchandize was never more general than at this time. Who are these merchants of Babylon ? They are those who profess to be apostles, but are not ; those who set up their own will, their own power, their own knowledge, their own wisdom, in direct opposition to the wisdom and power of God, which is only revealed to the children of men, by his blessed spirit in their souls ;—those who have acted according to their own spirits, and have, under the deceivings of anti-christ, set about to build up a church to Christ and God. But it is altogether a counterfeit ; because it is built up in the wisdom of men, and in the letter, which is their guide. This never did, never will, and never can, reveal a saving knowledge of God to the children of men ;—it killeth and bringeth death to the soul, when it is depended

upon—when it is made the principle thing. And how was it with the ancient city of Babylon? It was built of the best external materials; for the king had all at his command.

How is this mystery Babylon built? It is built of the best external materials; the best of all letter that ever was written on earth, and after all, it is nothing but letter. It is that which the wisdom of man has devised, and which he can work in for the sake of his own aggrandizement. They are striving to build up something like the great city formerly; that they who build it may have something to boast of. Is not this great Babylon, that we have built, by our own wisdom and by our own power? These materials they have at their own command; the letter of the scriptures, from which they can take every thing that is suitable for the deceivings of anti-christ, to deceive the people. Now it is out of this Babylon, that the Lord's children are called to "come out;"—out of these mixtures, that are built up in the wisdom of science, and the contrivance of the creature; for they are all deceptions and deceit. They are made use of to enslave and make merchandise of the souls of the children of men; and to make merchandise of the good works of those that have gone before them. The same apostle declared in former days, that a certain portion of men should rise up and turn away from the faith—the true faith—

and this divine teacher, the spirit of God in their own hearts ; and with feigned words they shall make merchandise of you.

Who are these, my friends ? I am willing to show you my view, as a witness at this season.

Those that do these things ; and all the host of them, that are made up of those that preach for hire and divine for money ; such as the apostle formerly cried out against—the Lord's people in former ages. These are the ones who are building up this spiritual Babylon, by which the nations are deceived and brought under subjection. They are reduced by their power to obey all these, who have not come to the disposition and condition that I have explained, sincerely and honestly to seek a knowledge of the true God inwardly revealed by his spirit and truth ; and which never has been revealed, only by his spirit, in any age of the world. Now it is to such that I call, to come out of this mystery Babylon, to partake not of her sins, lest they also partake of her plagues and fall. Although the time may seem long, yet her time will come, and great will be the fall of Babylon. When the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth ; and not only the earth, but the heavens also : as the apostle declared he would do. And is he not now rising up to bring about the truth of that declaration. What are the abominations in the sight of God, on this earth ? Every religious

performance which does not arise from the immediate workings of his spirit and power. For every thing of man's building, in religion ; every step that he takes in his own wisdom, is foolishness, and an abomination in the sight of heaven. Therefore this is the Babylon, the mother of harlots ; and thus they are harloted from God their creator, and from the teachings of his own blessed spirit in their souls ; and thus are they harlots to God. All their works are an abomination in the sight of God. And how plain it is, my friends ; we want neither men nor books to explain it, if we exercise our own understanding. From what we know and discover, we are sure, that if it is not of the spirit of God it must be the opposite ; as there are but two spirits, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. And what is this spirit of error ? It is the spirit of man ; that spirit which has assumed wisdom and power, in opposition to the leadings and commands of the spirit of God in his own soul. Here is that antichrist upon which all that Babylon's lustre and greatness is built. It is built up by men assuming to themselves the power to do the work of God in their own way and wisdom, by the mere help of the letter. See how plain and how clear it is.

What are all these seminaries of learning, to instruct men to be gospel ministers, but the works of foolish creatures ; what but the work and as-

sumption of the creature man, to do the work of God, in his own way and pleasure? Is it not so; is it not all of his own choice; is it not all for his own aggrandizement? I say, is it not all for his own honour? If it is not plain to every one, it is because they are so blind they will not see. Therefore, I say, the call is to every one of the Lord's people and children, among the various sects and societies of men, to come out of Babylon. Come out of Babylon, all ye that feel a love to God; who are wearied with your sins; who are wearied with this outside work, that gives no satisfaction to your immortal spirits; that gives no assurance that you are saved of the Lord and prepared for his kingdom. All you who are sin-sick, who have entered into a sincere engagement to seek a knowledge, a saving knowledge of God and of his truth; to you I call, to come out of Babylon. Come out of all these mixtures, all these contrivances of creatures in their own fallen wisdom, assuming to themselves the honour of being called the people of God. Here the man of sin is displayed; here he is manifested as the apostle declared. He saw that there would be a falling away from the truth, the spirit, and the life; that the man of sin and son of perdition would be revealed. It is he that has taken the seat of God in the heart, and exalted himself above all that is called God and worshipped.

Now look at these religious works, or pretend-

ed religious works, in Christendom; see how men have assumed the seat and place of God. They have undertaken in their own worldly wisdom, by the help of the letter that killeth, not only to qualify gospel ministers, and to send them forth, to preach the gospel, but they have ordained them as such: and yet you see, my friends, that all their works stand in direct opposition to the requisitions of the gospel. It was not to be set up by men; there was not to be a reward given for preaching the gospel, for freely was it given. Many are disposed to get their living out of it, by making merchandise of the writings of holy men of old. Now come out of these things,—these abominations; for this great mystery Babylon must come down. The Lord Almighty has determined its fall; that so the Lord may deliver his captive children from its deadly power. Let us throw away our prejudices, and let us try to rise above the traditions that we have been brought up in; for none of these will save us. All the education that we have received from men, from our fathers and mothers, and from the teachings of men, unless we come to know the truth for ourselves, will be a burthen on us. It will keep us in captivity and bondage; for what is the letter? It is that which man communicates. It is but an effect; it is not the cause. All that the effect can do, is to lead us, if we are wisely engaged, up to the great first cause; and

then we are done with the effect, for it can do no more. It cannot carry us forward in the great work of salvation ; it can merely point us to the great first cause. Therefore it is, that if we rest in the effect, death is our portion ; for let it come from what source it may,—let the source be what it may, it is no difference, for the effect cannot be the cause. But the effect must always rest upon its cause, and therefore it is, that we are recommended, by all the wise and the good in all ages, to gather inward to the spirit ; to prefer the spirit ; to know that nothing which is written can teach us aright, but the spirit of God. I say all letter written under the influence of God, points us back to the place from whence it came ; and this is all, because as the letter never could be written, without the Spirit which stands above it, the great first cause of all wisdom and knowledge ; therefore, unless by the letter we are gathered to the spirit we cannot use the letter aright. For it is the effect ; and when we face the letter we turn our backs upon the cause, just as a man turns his back upon the sun, to see his own shadow. If we would see the sun, we must lose sight of the shadow.

My friends, we are all, individually, called to come away from the shadow, and depend on the substance. I was led to renew this call, as an instrument ; but I recommend you to a higher power and a more excellent call, manifested in the se-

cret of every heart ; for the call has gone forth to the ends of the earth : all have heard but all have not obeyed. The truth has gone forth ; and the gospel is preached to every rational creature under heaven. I say the true gospel is preached unto every soul under heaven, and it ever has been so, since the fall of man. It has been preached by God himself in the secrets of our hearts. Therefore, those who have never seen any written testimony of it ; they have it as certainly as we have it ; and, in proportion as they improve upon it, they come to know God for themselves, and his truth. Then wherein are we better, than they who have not the letter ? We are no better at all, unless we improve our privileges as fully as those do who have not the letter. For as the letter written by inspired men of God, will revive the quickening influence of the word within our souls ; he has called us to come away from the world, and the things that are in the world ; from all its glories and honours. Let us remember our gracious pattern, how he was tempted and tried with the glories and honours of the world, both as they related to religion, and to the glories of the outward world. So are we also tempted and tried as he was, by the glories, the pleasures and riches of the external world.

And how are we to get along ? We cannot get along unless we make the choice that our blessed pattern did ; to have no will of our own.

He said, "I came not to do mine own will; but the will of him that sent me; and to finish his work." We have all been placed in this state of probation—for this end have we all come into the world, and for no other end, as relates to God our Creator and to our own soul's true interest and joy. Therefore every thing that grows up and stands upon man's judgment, independent of God's will, is an abomination in the sight of God; and one of the greatest of sins. So that all we want is, to come back to the Spirit, to that inward law of God, the light and covenant which God made with his creature man in the beginning. He made a covenant of light and life with him. And what was it? when he placed him in that place allotted him, and opened access to him, he communed with him face to face. What was this covenant? It was this,—thou shalt obey my voice, and live. He gave him great liberty in relation to all other creatures of the earth, but he reserved to himself this rightful prerogative; that man should not take upon himself to know good and evil; because if he took to himself that power he would rise up to an equality with his maker, and turn from him, as having no need of him. This was a prerogative, that God Almighty reserved from the beginning; and this is his rightful prerogative, which he is calling on us to come back and surrender up to the God of our salvation. He requires nothing else, my friends; there is no-

thing else wanting, to reconcile us to God, but a sacrifice of our own wills ; a crucifixion of the old man with his deeds. This we must come and be willing to do. We must let the fire of his word burn up all the combustible matter in us, which has grown up in our own devices, respecting matters of religion. Every thing that man has invented must be cast into the fire and burnt up. And, Oh ! that we might come to see the time when we shall hear it exclaimed, “ Babylon is fallen, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” Here we should all come to find that the work of salvation is an individual work. It is a work, my friends, which cannot be done by another ; for it must be done under the leading and direction of the spirit of God. We must all be brought down into submission and continual obedience ; and be willing to gather back into the condition of our great pattern, and to say to the Lord Almighty, as the prodigal said to his father, “ Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight ; and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Now, although we have sinned, and lived in the gratification of our own will and carnal desires, yet if we call on the Lord in humiliation, in sorrow and distress, he will hear and be gracious to us. Let us then be willing to say, Gracious God, pardon my transgressions, and I will surrender up myself to thy holy will and disposal. Let me be the clay and thou the potter ;

make me what thou wouldest have me to be. —This is the condition we must all come down to; it is the sacrifice of atonement that we must all make to God Almighty. We have all slain the lamb in our souls;—we have stifled and smothered the gift of God, and destroyed it as it respects ourselves, although we could not hurt it otherwise. We are dead by our transgressions; and the Lord is calling us to come out of Babylon, and all dependance upon external things; come out of all ordinances, ceremonies, prayers, and whatever stands in the invention of the creature. They are an abomination in the sight of God.

Have we not just cause to believe this to be true? No one knows God, but the spirit of God; then, can man set about it and pray when he pleases, and put it in his own letter? Can he bring his offerings in his own time? No, my friends, no man can be taught to preach the gospel:—no one ever was taught, or ever will be taught, to know the real will of God, by the letter. Nothing can teach it but his own blessed spirit. For the truth of this assertion, we have not only the testimony of the holy men of old, but we have a still greater evidence in ourselves. By merely turning to the light within us, we have a clearer evidence than all the books in the world can ever give us. For there is nothing but the spirit of God, that can teach us the things of God.

What is it, that makes us to rejoice before God? Is it any thing that we read in books? No, it is the evidence in ourselves, of the mollifying spirit of his love, when we turn our attention to him and obey him.

We have an evidence above all other evidence. There is nothing in earth or in heaven, which can give us so clear an evidence. On the contrary; is there any thing in the book, or in all books, that can convince us of sin as he does by his spirit? What is it that makes us feel guilty, when we know that we have gone contrary to the light and truth of God in our own souls? Is it not the evidence we have in ourselves that brings guilt? Is it in the book? No, but we feel it immediately from God. We do not feel it from the book or the laws of men, in relation to the things of God. We feel it from the moving and operation of his light in our own souls; which brings its own evidence, and condemns us. Thus we are compelled to plead guilty; for in his presence we dare not do otherwise. It is because we know we have turned away from his commands: and it is not the book which taught us to know it? It is something not to be found written in all the books in the world.

I have felt the experience of this myself. I have felt myself accused, and my soul convicted, when all the books in the world would not have disturbed me. Here the light that was

struck up in my soul, gave me a clear evidence of my case; and many times in things which the laws and customs of man would have justified as right. But this divine light, told me it was sinful in the sight of God, notwithstanding all the books left me without condemnation. The divine light opened to my view the impropriety of it; for I was impeached and bound to plead guilty, when I had done that which the light showed me, was not consistent with the will of a gracious God.

Has not this been your case, my friends? I apprehend it must have been the case, more or less, with you all; unless you have been very unmindful; unless you have been careless and indifferent about truth and error; and unless you have given up, to pursue your own desires, whether right or wrong;—unless you have become callous before God, and your light has been turned into darkness.

See the command of the blessed Jesus to his disciples, when he sent them forth. They were to go without purse or scrip; without asking any thing from man, but depending on God Almighty for ability in what to say. They were not to meditate upon what to say. Now we see that all man-made ministers, are all the ministers of Babylon—are direct antipodes to this doctrine. They stand as antipodes, in direct opposition to God and his law. They preach for hire

and divine for money ; but not one step will they take, to do the least thing, unless they are to be rewarded by some pecuniary means, or worldly honour from man. Hence they all stand in direct opposition to the light ; and we see it in the clear light of day, that these are the ones who make up this mystery Babylon. And it is out of this Babylon, I call you to “come out”—to come away, and be not partakers with her in her sins, lest ye also partake of her plagues. For her sins are exalted to Heaven ;—the Lord has beheld, and will reward her according to her works ; according to what she has done, in oppressing and deceiving others. This is mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots ; and abominations of the earth. And are they not united, in all the cruelties and bloodshed, and enslaving their fellow creatures ; and thus going on, hand in hand, in direct opposition to God—and his law and will concerning us. How this oppression yet prevails within the borders of this mystery Babylon.

It is high time that all the Lord’s children should come out, and take a stand against these enormities. Now there can be but two parties in the business, the Lord’s children, and the children of men. The children of men are those who move on in their own wisdom and invention ; decide for themselves, and pay no regard to the law of God, written in their own hearts. They

build up systems and societies, and make a great show, under a pretence of doing the Lord's work, when, alas! he has not called them, nor sent them, nor inspired them with his love or light in the work. They have taken up in their own wisdom and understanding, those things which men can use at their pleasure, the letter. Thus they can turn it every way, and fashion it to suit every building, according to their own minds and imaginations; and, therefore, they build up a great many systems which differ in their outward appearance, but they are all under "the great king of the locusts," which the apostle saw come "up out of the bottomless pit; and which had power to hurt men."

Oh, my friends, my mind is led, by gospel love, to speak the truth in plainness. The time has come when we must no longer tamper with one another; for God calls for the truth, and that every man should speak the truth to his neighbour, without feigned words: that so we may become helpers in the great work of our soul's salvation, by encouraging one another in all things, without fear, and without favour of men. As this comes to be our happy experience, we shall be able to cast out all fear of man: and how wonderfully this fear prevails. How few are there, among those who profess even to be men of understanding and capacity, who are not afraid of man? They dare not acknowledge the

plainest truths, for fear of one another. What servants can these be to the Almighty? They are poor servants. Oh! turn inward to the grace of God in the heart; and be willing to come like humble Mary, formerly, when under the outward dispensation, and have but one teacher, as she had. She had but one teacher, Jesus, in the outward, and she was willing to sit down in silence at his feet, and wait to hear the gracious words of his mouth. See how Christ communed with his disciples, when he was about to leave them. He showed them the necessity of this humiliated state. He told them to wait at Jerusalem, to sit down in a state of nothingness and self-abasement; and not stir nor to do any thing, to proclaim him, or bear witness of his name, till the Holy Ghost should descend upon them. He said "tarry at Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." He did not tell them the time nor the season, for he knew it not; the times and seasons were in the Father's hands, and the Son knew it not.

Here now as they had lost their outward teacher, whom they depended upon, they could do nothing. Here they learnt self-abasement; here they learnt humiliation of soul, in this debased state; while they sat waiting and looking for the promise of the Father, which he had declared should be manifested to them. Here their minds were brought into a preparation to receive

him. And so they did receive him, and knew him to come with power. So it will be with every one of us, and it is necessary for us, individually, to be brought into the same state of abasement, and there wait for the Comforter to come: to hear the voice of the true shepherd in our own hearts.

Oh! had not our first parent deviated; would not the Lord have led him up in due time to the knowledge of science? Yes: for he had placed in him a desire for knowledge; and had he not gone beyond the bounds prescribed, but waited under the divine manifestation, he would have gradually, opened to him a knowledge of good and evil, and it would not have been death to him. But when he chose to take it for himself, and to turn away from his supreme director; then he slew the lamb in his own soul; “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” It was slain by our first parents; and has been slain by every one of us since, by our sins. This was the true light of God in the soul. By turning from it, it becomes dead to us, and we dead to it. And hence the command was verified and fulfilled: “In the day thou eatest thereof,” or presumest to be as God, to know good and evil, “thou shalt surely die.” And we do so now; therefore so long as we pursue our own will and our own way, death and darkness is our portion continually.

Man knows nothing of the things of God as he ought to know them; therefore, my friends, be persuaded and entreated to turn about and remember the “father’s house where there is bread enough and to spare.” And are there not those present, whose souls are hungering after righteousness; but who are running about after the lo heres, and lo theres, that are up and down in the earth? Oh, my friends, run no longer after the lo heres, and lo theres. Your Saviour is within you, he is not without you, he never can be found without; he is not to be known except in your own souls. Nothing but the immortal soul of man is a recipient for the power and the spirit of God;—nothing else can receive the word of God. It must be immediate, and will be so to every one that seeks aright and turns inward. We must have patience and not do as our first parents did. It will not do to set ourselves to work as Saul did,—and what a curse he brought upon himself. And so it will be with us, my friends, if we set about any religious matter in our own will; it will be a curse to us.

Let us wait and be humble; for it is the humble that he teaches his ways, and guides in the path of righteousness. Let us be like those that are poor in spirit. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comfort-

ed. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Here we see where the blessing rests. It is not upon the active professor: it is not upon the man and the woman that can go to the altar at any time they please, and do as they please; and turn away into the world, and gratify their selfish desires, by aggrandizing the creature, to be seen of men.

Oh! that I could persuade you, to give up all your old religion, that stands in the letter. I make no distinction; for all religions that stand in the letter are alike; for the letter killeth. Give all up, and come down into that situation, in which Jesus left his disciples. Notwithstanding all that he had done for them; and all the miracles he had wrought among them, he told them, they must come to an end of it. "It is expedient for you, that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you."

All must go away. We must no longer look to the letter, let it come from what source it may; it is no difference. He directed them to wait for the spirit. "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter;" another than the letter, and different from any that you ever heard verbally from me, or from men; for it is

all but letter ;—all that can come to you through your external senses. But the will of God manifested within us, never can come through the external senses, it must come through the spiritual senses : and then it will quicken the soul, open the blind eye and deaf ear of the soul, so that it can see and hear the things of God clearly. The time has come, I believe, when it is necessary to give up all our old foundations, and suffer them, my friends, to pass under judgment,—that judgment may pass upon all, and that his truth may be revealed. “It is expedient that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go away, I will pray the Father, and he will send another Comforter.” Another in what respect? A spiritual one, disencumbered with any thing corporal ;—entirely spiritual and nothing else. Why? Because the soul of man is purely spiritual ; and nothing can have communion with the Father, but that which is a spiritual, an immortal soul. Every thing, then, derived from the letter, must come through the external senses, and can only answer for the outward creature : but when the spiritual senses are quickened by the coming in of the spirit of God, and the shining of his light upon the soul, it opens a renewed intercourse with his creature man, as he did with our first parents in the beginning, in Eden’s garden.

What is Eden’s garden, my friends? It is

the place where the Lord God is pleased to commune with his creatures face to face, and no where else: it is every where, where God is. It was undoubtedly the design of Heaven, that man should never transgress; but always be conversant with his Creator in spirit. For there is no conversing with God Almighty, but in the spirit. Here our first parents held holy communion with him, while they were faithful and obedient. But we have all turned aside as they did. For we discover that when the Lord impeached them, and brought them to conviction, no doubt he granted them repentance; and we read that he clothed them with “coats of skins to cover their nakedness.” And what was this nakedness? You do not suppose ignorantly it was the animal body that was naked? No, it was the nakedness of the soul, that they knew they could not hide from the All seeing eye. It was the soul that was open and naked; for what can transgress against God, except it be the soul? This poor animal body cannot commit sin against God, nor was it ever to do a good act of itself. It is not in bones to think, or flesh to reason;—it is the soul only that can have communion with God; because that communion can only be spiritual. These coats of skin that he covered them with, are emblems of a more durable covering; and he clothed them again with his holy spirit. Here now is encouragement for every one: for although we have abun-

dantly exceeded them in transgressions;—though they were guilty of but one transgression, and we have been guilty of ten thousand; yet his arms are open to receive us, if we will come out of Babylon. I say, if we will only come out of Babylon, he will receive us; he will show us our transgressions and make us sensible of our sins; and if we will only turn about and cease to do evil, under the leading of his blessed spirit, relieve the oppressed, and plead for the widow, then see how he would lead us along. Then, and not until then, will he reason with us face to face. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;” but if you do not, the contrary will be your portion. Then he would clothe us with coats of skin again,—with his holy spirit; and we should joy in the God of our salvation.

Oh! be engaged, my dearly beloved friends; my dearly beloved young people, remember your Creator in the days of your youth; for now is the best time to serve the Lord. He has not made us to serve and please ourselves; but we are made to serve and please God;—to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. Therefore, every thing you do, must all be for this blessed end; whether in eating, in drinking, or in putting on apparel. You must be so under his direction as to

demean yourselves rightly in all these things : for God loveth righteousness, but hateth iniquity. But if we come up as his beloved son was said to come up, we shall be blessed likewise. Therefore, as God anointed him with the oil of gladness, so he will do for you, my dear young friends : were you concerned to walk in the path of rectitude, love righteousness, and hunger and thirst after it, waiting upon the Lord to direct ; then it would be, that his fear would so dwell in your hearts, that you would be afraid to eat or to drink, or to do any thing, in your own will. You would wait in all things, to know the will of your Heavenly Father ; so in all things, like our blessed pattern, you could say, I find I am not here to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Oh ! may your souls be won to God for ever hereafter ; for he stands ready to bless you ; he cannot be a partial God. I can look back to my childhood, and see his mercy and kindness toward me. How it often softened my heart and clothed me with feelings of love. I knew not from whence it came, but it caused me to look up and love him. When I transgressed, I was ready to reprove and impeach myself for my folly. My pillow was often wet with my tears, when I was very young.

So he will do for you, if you will come unto him, for he is a God of equity and truth ;—he cannot be partial to the children of men. And

therefore, he is willing to come, and be your Comforter ; to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers ; to make ready a people prepared for himself. This he is doing now, and has been doing in all ages of the world. He wills not the death of any one, but that all should return, repent, and live. Oh ! that we might all believe this doctrine, and never give heed to that diabolical doctrine of predestination : that God has elected a certain portion to eternal life, and a much greater class of his children to suffer eternal punishment. How abhorrent to every rational soul, to suffer the thought to pass, or listen to the doctrine as believing it in any degree. No, he has placed us here for a great and glorious purpose ; and endowed us with understanding hearts ; and he has given us a portion of power, whereby, being free agents, we may elect for ourselves. Otherwise we could never rise to that glorified state, to make us fit to be communicants with him in the celestial regions. He has given us power to make our own election ; and none are elected of God, who do not elect the Lord for their portion, and the God of Jacob for the lot of their inheritance. Those who elect him are his elect, and none others ; and these elect will show forth that they are the elect by their works ; for “ by their fruits ye shall know them.” Those who elect the Lord for their portion, will show it by their works :

for they will be filled with love and charity for their fellow creatures, without hypocrisy. Nothing else can give a proof of our christian progress, but our works of righteousness. We all have an example to walk by. We that have the privilege of reading the example of the blessed Jesus. He began his work of righteousness in his childhood ; and so we ought to do. For we read that he grew in stature, and in favour with God and man, and the grace of God was upon him ; and it was this grace that led him to submit to his Father's will. Did we according to our measure begin in our childhood ; and were we as attentively engaged, it would lead us in the same way ; and because we are not, his example condemns us.

He showed by his own walk that he did his Father's will in all things ; and so ought we to follow his example. So it becomes our absolute duty, to attend to the light of the spirit as manifested to us ; and when we do this, if we feel guilty, we know that we have transgressed against his holy will : for nothing but an absolute knowledge of this, could make a rational creature feel guilty. The very moment we feel guilty, we acknowledge in the sight of heaven that we have transgressed, against God's holy law. Oh! my friends, that we might learn by the things that we suffer. We must come into his image in righteousness ; for nothing else can intro-

duce us into the kingdom of heaven, but to come into the image of Jesus ; into his righteousness and faithfulness to his heavenly Father. Here we may follow him ; and even those who have never heard the name of the gospel ; nay, every creature under heaven, of every nation, has a witness in themselves. There they know what the mind of the Great Spirit is ; there they know the mind of Jehovah, by whatever name he may be called. They can all come home to the witness of God in their own souls ;—there they feel all their condemnation. We have a gracious God to do with ; who is able to give all that is necessary. If the Scriptures were absolutely necessary, he had power to communicate them to all the nations of the earth. For he has his way as a path in the clouds ; he knows how to deal out to all his rational children. But they were not necessary ; and perhaps not suited to any other people than they to whom they were written. Is it to be supposed that he has neglected any nation ? Can we suppose that he has forgotten the rest of the nations of the earth ? No, he has dispensed a suitable law, to answer every purpose, as completely as the law to the Israelites answered for them ; for otherwise he is a partial God. But he is not partial ; for, to every nation he deals in his own way, according to his own loving kindness ; and these, in proportion to their faithfulness, come to be united to him,

and to know salvation as completely as any others. Oh! let every christian professor look at home: let him remove the beam out of his own eye before he attempts to remove the mote out of his brother's eye in other nations. But are they not going on, "encompassing sea and land to make one proselyte?" And when he is made, they have made him two-fold more the child of hell than he was before. It is to be feared that this is too true. Oh! come out then from amongst them; come out from all these mixtures, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Oh! "come out of Babylon, my people; be not partakers in her sins, lest ye partake also of her plagues."

It was nothing but turning to the letter that led to the apostacy—turning away from the spirit—nothing else,—that was the whole cause of it. It is very easy to be seen from the records of the church, and from the reason and nature of things; because as they were attentive to the directions of Jesus, they were to do nothing till they had received power from on high. Therefore he never recommended them to any book, nor was it needful. For as they attend to the one thing needful, each one has that which comprehends ten thousand times more than all the books in the world can comprehend. Because every thing is comprehended in the gift of God

in the soul; and would be revealed in the right time to them, and thus have brought them together in the bonds of love: although they did not get out from under the traditions of their fathers;—wherefore, not getting clear from these, soon after the primitive times,—they soon began—the survivors of them—to cry out, “I am of Paul; I of Apollos; and I of Cephas.” To justify themselves, they took up the writings of these individuals. Here now, see they turned from the Spirit into the letter that killeth. And so it has been by attending to the letter, darkness has spread itself over Christendom, working in her own will by the letter, and not by the Spirit; and it will never be good day with us till we turn back to first principles.

A little caution arises, and a word before we part. My dear friends, judge nothing before the time. As we have been quietly and solemnly together, let us not enter into conversation about what we have heard. Let us take it home and ponder it in our own hearts; let us search and see for ourselves, whether these things are so or not; and then we shall be profited by what we have heard. But I have often thought it has been the case, after a solemn meeting, by entering into conversation about what has been heard, that it has all been talked away; and the hearers have been like a door upon its

hinges, we go as we come, and we come as we go; without being any better for it. Let us then settle down in our own minds; and consider, that now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation, while the Lord in his mercy is waiting upon us, and visiting us by his light and love in our hearts.

SERMON VI.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, ABINGTON, IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ON SECOND DAY MORNING, 6th
OF TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

My mind, since sitting in this meeting, has been considerably oppressed with a death-like state; a state of ease and carnal security: and the language of my spirit has been, Awake, O sleepers, arise from the dead, and your light shall come. It will break forth out of obscurity, and your darkness shall be as the noon day.

The design and end of the new covenant does not intend any thing more nor less, than a reconciliation of man to his Maker, and to his fellow creature. For this is all that is wanting, in order to prepare and put man in a condition to fulfil the end of his creation. It was only a new covenant to Israel. It was not new to any other nation of the earth; because Israel was the only people, with whom the Lord had made an outward covenant, which was to wax old. The covenant that God made with man, in the beginning, remains still unbroken on his part; and is the same to all the nations of the earth; a covenant of love and of life, standing in this

condition principally and alone: “Obey my word, and thy soul shall live.”

The New Testament, so called, which is usually bound up in the book called the Bible, comprehends no covenant: there is nothing in it that appertains to a covenant. It consists chiefly and principally in a biographical account of the birth, the miracles, and the excellent life of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary; and of the epistles and writings of his apostles. But the covenant made with Israel, as comprehended in what is called the Old Testament, was a real covenant, and was bound in a very solemn manner, and had its witnesses. It was a covenant, founded upon a promise made to Abraham—righteous Abraham,—for whose righteousness, God promised to him, that he would bless him and his seed; that he would bless his offspring, by giving them a certain land, which he would make the glory of all lands by his blessings. No doubt he fore-saw, the state and condition, into which the off-spring of Abraham would be brought, when they came to be a great people, after being deli-
vered from the bondage into which they were brought by going down willingly into Egypt. They were not then prepared to receive any other covenant than the one which he gave them; and which related to the good things of this world. This he fulfilled according to his promise, by giving them a good land: which, in all

respects, carried a figure of Heaven to the soul. It had every thing that could give rejoicing to the animal bodies of Israel.

This covenant was perfect, and contained a perfect rule; the design of which was, to reconcile the people to God Almighty, and to each other; and as far as they were obedient, it had this effect. It was placed in the power of every Israelite, to fulfil it; and had they done it, they would have been reconciled to God and man, and have lived in peace and harmony, till the time came for its being done away, and when he had prepared a way for a more glorious and excellent covenant;—which is a law written upon the soul with the finger of God. And had the Israelites been faithful, all might have been prepared to meet the introduction of this covenant and law, spoken of by their prophets.

Here now, we see what we want; we see by our own experience what we lack. But if we look around us, how few do we see, among those who make a profession of being under the new covenant dispensation, or rather the old covenant, written upon the heart, that God made in the beginning, and which has never been broken, and still continues on his part: therefore, it all lies upon our part. How few, I say, do we see, that have really come into it. Yet it is so plain—it is so clear—it is a rule so perfectly self-evident, that no one can err, if he will but obey.

Nothing causes error, but an unwillingness to obey this law written upon the heart; for it is written in characters which cannot be misunderstood. And were we faithful, and concerned to submit ourselves to it, and to realize it in all our conduct, we should become reconciled to our Heavenly Father and to one another. It is impossible, in the nature of things, for it to be otherwise; because the law is in itself suited to every soul, and is self-evident to every mind; therefore, by a faithful adherence to it, we should become reconciled to God and to our fellow creatures; and as every one has it in the same way, so it would reconcile us and unite us as one.

By a strict attention to this, we should come to witness the prayer of Jesus fulfilled; when he prayed concerning the disciples, that they might become one among themselves: “that as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one as we are one.”

Nothing is wanting, my friends, but a submission to this inward divine law; and, therefore, it behoves us to cast away all confidence in every thing else. For if we look back and see the covenant, that the Lord made with his people Israel; we discover that it was alike to all the Israelites; it was one covenant, and to every one alike: and hence, we see, that every one might have kept it—might have conformed to it. Eve-

ry item was set forth; and every Israelite had it before his view. There was no difficulty to understand and obey it, had there been a willingness on their part. God had done every thing to make the way clear and easy to them; if they had been willing to meet him in his mercy and loving kindness. He would leave no stone unturned, to make the way clear and easy. If there was any difficulty, it was on their part; they must have created it all, for there was none anywhere else. And the reason is, we are unwilling to be governed by another;—even by him who has a right to do all things; him that has given to every one life and being, and all the blessings they enjoy. Therefore, it is not just that we should be permitted to have our way. We ought to be in complete subjection to his holy will in all things; because if we deviate from it, and act according to our own judgment, it is an act of great injustice, and a sin against God.

The time has come when we ought to rally to that standard—that noble and excellent one, which is held up by a power, that nothing can prevail against; that no storms can baffle or disturb. It can never be turned out of the way;—we shall see it exalted, as long as we will look to it, and attend to the great director, there daily and hourly manifesting his will to the children of men, the world over.

But this is a way not pleasant to flesh and blood. It is a way, that is a cross to every thing selfish: and yet we acknowledge a belief in the doctrine, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”—Is not this language proclaimed in our souls continually, by that power from Heaven, which enlightens every rational creature of God, making manifest in us every thing reprobable, for whatever is reprovable is made manifest by the light, and nothing can make manifest but the light.

We have all received of this light individual ly; and can plead no excuse;—the Lord Almighty will leave us all without excuse forever. For this power of God revealed in us, will always make us feel guilty. It shows us what we ought to do, and what we ought to leave undone: and nothing ever made a rational creature feel guilt, but an absolute knowledge, that it had transgressed against this light, and that it had done wrong when it might have done right. There is nothing else that could impose guilt on any living soul. I will appeal to you, my friends, for this truth.

But mankind have got into such a bewildered state, through their many inventions and vain imaginations in which they have been brought up, that they have been led to put light for darkness and truth for error. Hence, error having

ecome established as truth, through tradition and education—through wrong teachers ; the great struggle is, to get clear of this bondage. We have adopted error for truth ; and therefore when we have done error for truth, through the transformations of antichrist ; here if we omit this error a degree of conviction may strike the mind, making it feel guilty : but this is for want of ridding ourselves of tradition and prejudice, and coming under a conviction that the light which is in us is perfect in itself. Therefore we ought to try to get out of every thing which we have gathered from tradition ; for we never can know God or his law, by any thing without us, as respects the law of his new covenant, or the covenant which God made with man in the beginning ; and by which he was to receive blessings, on the condition that he should always obey his commands. “Obey, and thy soul shall live,” saith the Lord by his prophet, “and I will make an everlasting covenant with thee.” And so he will, my friends, undoubtedly. And, Oh ! may we come to a willingness to turn away from every thing outward, and gather inward to the law of God in our own souls.

We find that, although these things are so plainly written in the book which we call the Bible, yet we feel and know, certainly, that there is no power in it to enable us to put in practice what is therein written. One would suppose that to

a rational mind, the hearing and reading of the instructive parables of Jesus, would have a tendency to reform, and turn men about to truth, and lead them on in it. But they have no such effect. We have read the parable concerning the kingdom of Heaven; wherein and by which he would show to his disciples, that they should no longer depend on the outward law and covenant, or testament; but that they should turn inward. For he declared that the kingdom of Heaven did not come by any outward observation; because the kingdom was nearer to them than any thing outward could be. “The kingdom of God is within you;” for where God is, there is his kingdom; there his law is, and there he sits upon his throne, if the law is obeyed. And to what shall we liken it? Jesus likened it to leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Here he tells us in plain terms to turn inward to the light of God in the soul; because nothing is hid from him, and we cannot escape reproof with all our power. He will reprove us for every crime. Here now how self-evident it is to us; we feel his power over every power, when we become passive like the meal, and turn away from our self-willedness, and self-conceiving and contriving, into humiliation, from a sense that we have not power to do or think any right thing of ourselves.

When we become thus passive like the meal; then, the kingdom of God in the soul begins to extend its power and holy nature, influencing us to a compliance with the divine requirements. We may read of this; but has the letter ever turned any one, to the right thing, unless the light opening it to the understanding, has helped him to put in practice what the letter dictates? So it is with every thing external, in relation to the great work of our souls' salvation. And yet all the religion of Christendom is built up upon the letter, and nothing else; and what does it do? It brings them into that very death decreed to our first parents: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."—So they who presume to build up a structure with their own materials, they shall die to God; because by so doing, they turn away from the divine law and command. And here they are left to grope in darkness, and to decide for themselves, according to their own vain imaginations. Here is death indeed! Here is darkness which is to be felt. —And this death will reign, till we come to this internal divine law: as it is written, "death reigned from Adam to Moses;" and it is now reigning over the children of men; over every one who does not come to attend to the inward divine law, which is shown to us by the light of God. So long as we keep from it, and do not come into it, and enter into a covenant with it;

so long are we in that death and darkness, which has reigned from the time of our entering into Adam's state, which is a state of death, darkness, disobedience, and turning away from the divine light. It will reign till we come back again, and renew the covenant with the **Holy One**. And here this light would not only show us all our follies, and all the vanities that are captivating the minds of the children of men; some in one thing, and some in another: but every thing, which does not stand in subjection to the divine will, will be counted vanity. “**Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity, and vexation of spirit.**” We shall then be brought to leave all our vanities, that we are now in the pursuit of, in ten thousand different ways; for few of us are alike; nay, there are no two alike. Some are pursuing vanity, in gathering riches; and in the accumulation of the world's treasures; and others in spending and squandering them. Others are pleasing themselves with vain amusements; with decking their poor bodies, with clothing tenfold more insignificant than the clothing of the butterfly; because that is according to nature. So it is, my friends; and we never can be clothed aright, till we come to know ourselves clothed upon by the spirit of God. Then being clothed upon with his righteous spirit in the heart, we shall clothe ourselves with nothing but what he admits and sanctifies to us, in such

a way that we shall feel thanksgiving to him for the blessing. Oh ! may we dig deep.

Some may say, “ is there any religion in clo-thing ? ” Yes, there is religion in every thing that is of God ; and out of God, there is no religion at all. Every ribbon, that is put on to gratify yourselves in the pride of your hearts, is an idol, and you worship it. You put it on, because you love it better than you love the Almighty. Now I appeal to the youth, for the truth of this decla-ration.

“ These are little things ; ” here is the subtle pleader—the twining serpent. Here he is twining in our propensities, and leading us to a wrong use of the gifts of a gracious Providence; we having liberty to use them, instead of using them under God and according to his requirings in our souls, we use them for our own gratifica-tion. Here it is, that the evil originates. Here it is, that men and women create all the sin in the world, by following foolish fashions, and turning away from simplicity and truth, for fear of man—for fear of the world’s broad laugh, and the finger of reproach. Here we show that we have another God before our eyes ; for we care more for man, than we do for our Creator. I want you to take this home my friends ; I appeal to you—you know these truths to be so.

What are these great high crowned hats ?

Were they ever devised in the wisdom of God ?
No, it is impossible that they should be.

There are various, and many ways, in which we are led away by the evil workings in us, by which we abuse the blessings of a gracious providence. The apostle sums all this up in a few expressions, which may apply to almost every thing ; and what an abundance of evil there is in the world, through that one thing. Some, he says, will say, “ we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.” What an abundance of evil arises from this wilfulness of man ; this selfish and presumptuous disposition of an entirely dependant creature. What ought he to do then ? He ought to keep in remembrance, that the earth, and all that is in it, is the Lord’s : “ the cattle of a thousand hills are his ;” and the least plant that grows is his ; the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the plants and the trees of the forest are all his : and we have no right to use any of his blessings, only agreeably to his good will and pleasure. We have no more right to take the things of God, and use them for our own selfish ends, than we have to go into our neighbour’s field and take his things : indeed I think, it a greater crime ; because here, in the first instance, I offend the highest ; I go in opposition to him who owns all things, and to whom all things belong.

In my neighbour's field, there may be many things growing spontaneously by the power of God, without the aid or cultivation of my neighbour; and, therefore, I might partake with less crime, though not in accordance with the rules and regulations of society, or the principles of morality. Yet, I say, it would not be as great a crime, as to use any of God's blessings, in direct opposition to his divine will.

Now if this be the case, that we are thus circumstanced, in relation to our great Creator, is it not our duty, to seek to know his will? We should never touch nor take any thing at all, unless we believe it to be agreeable to his holy will. Until we come to this subjection; this humble and abased state; we cannot be like the passive meal; and, therefore, the leaven of the kingdom will not work to our profit. And we see it does not work in us; for we are not reconciled to God nor to one another. But if we could be brought to this passive state, in attentive obedience to the divine law written upon our hearts, then we should become reconciled to God, and reconciled one to another. It is impossible that there should be any jar or animosity, or any discord, among the children of men, who come into this condition. Because, all "the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and in righteousness are they established;" and great is the peace of these children. So it would be with us:—and

Oh! that we could see it! Oh! that the children of men could see, that if they were faithful to the Lord's teaching they would dwell together in harmony: every one would do that justice which the divine law in the heart requires; and when we had done perfect justice, we should love one another with pure hearts. Here we should be united in the bonds of unity and harmony; because as God is one, his truth is one, his law and light one; so, as we come under its leading, and are submissive to its holy influence, we are brought into its true nature, and become one in him. The prayer of Jesus is verified, he in us, and we in him; and all would become one in the heavenly father together. For here as we come into this unity, the soul surrenders all up to its father, and thus God becomes all in all.

Oh! my friends, "the height and depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" How wonderfully are they displayed to the children of men; and yet how few are sensible of it, if we judge by their fruits. And we are to judge them by their fruits, for "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Let us look around and observe, and see the commotions and disturbances, not only among nations, but in the varied societies of professed Christians; and in the varied families of the children of men. How few are the private families, who live in harmony, united in the bonds

of love and affection, so as to pass on at all times rejoicing together; which would be the case if they were under the guidance of the divine law. But here, any little trifle in relation to the vanities of the world, will produce strife, whether it have a being or not a being, a reality or not a reality. Because we have been brought by tradition and books, to believe this or that, and others will not come down to our standard: here discord enters; and many things rise up to destroy the peace of families and nations. And it was said by Jesus, “think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword.” So it is with this divine light, it comes not to give peace to men in their fallen condition, but to set them at variance one with another. For every one who attends to it rightly, will be opposed by those who do not yield obedience to it. “For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” See how fully it is verified in the present day: and Oh! that we might learn by these things deep wisdom; so as to cast off all dependance on any thing without us; for every thing outward is mortal, and will come to an end. The spirit must be separated from matter; when the body returns to the dust from whence it was taken;

and while it sleeps in the bosom of the earth, the soul will be with God who gave it. It has nothing, therefore, to do with any thing external; for nothing corporeal can do it any good. No, it never can release the soul from sin. None of all the outward offerings ever made the comers thereto perfect, as pertains to the conscience. The only offering that is acceptable in the sight of Heaven is the offering of an humble and a contrite heart, and the soul that trembles. “Unto that man will I look who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word.”

Oh! turn, and be persuaded by a brother that loves you, and craves your eternal felicity. Turn your backs upon every thing that is mortal, and come to the invisible court, and follow our great pattern into the holiest of holies, where every thing is lost sight of that is external, and the soul comes to settle down in the holy power of God. Then we shall not be carried about by outward things; we shall have no cares, but the one single care to know and do the will of our heavenly Father in all things: whether in eating, drinking, or in putting on apparel; we shall be willing to do all for the glory of God; for this was the end for which we were made and created.

Now I hold these things up as a mirror; that you and I may compare ourselves with this view, and see where our deficiencies and spots are.

For this pure law is a mirror of life : it will show us all our spots and wrinkles, and all the secret crevices of our souls ; all our hidden sins will be manifested by the light.

Oh ! that the spirit that dwelt in David might dwell in us—that from a sense of our impotence and weakness, our prayers might ascend like his, “Lord, show me my secret faults.”

And what are these faults that are so various and so many ? Why some are led away to the worship of images; by being deceived and turned aside by traditions and by books : they worship other Gods beside the true God. They have been so bound up in the letter, that they think they must attend to it to the exclusion of every thing else. Here is an abominable idol worship, of a thing without any life at all ; a dead monument. Oh ! that our minds might be enlightened —that our hearts might be opened ; that we might know the difference between thing and thing. Most of the worship in Christendom is idolatry,—dark and blind idolatry ; for all outward worship is so : it is a mere worship of images. For if we make an image even in imagination, it is an idol.

There is nothing we can resort to, but to cast every thing behind our backs, and turn inward, and submit to the divine light in our own souls. It will be to us like the teaching of Jesus to his

disciples, when he was with them. He told them to tarry at Jerusalem, to sit down and wait in humble silence. I must leave you. Your dependence has been upon me; but this dependence must be taken away; you must place no confidence on me any more. So, if we have been depending upon books, they must go away or our Comforter will not come. There is no place in the heart for him; for there cannot be two opposite things in the soul at once. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life; and, therefore, if the letter take possession of the heart, the spirit is ousted, and turned out—till “its head is wet with dew, and its locks with the drops of the night.” We have shut him out! We have shut the truly beloved out of our hearts; and instead of looking within for his law, we are seeking it by meditating in the letter without us! But we should meditate in the law written in our own souls. And what benefit we should find in this meditation! We see the Israelites—though their law was so plain and so clear, they were to meditate in it, that they might do it, and obtain the blessings that were promised by it—which was the highest state they could bear. And are we not to be as careful as they? What they obtained by meditating and living up to the law, was nothing but an outward good land; the land of Canaan. But here we have the promise, that if we meditate in this inward divine law and obey its

dictates, Heaven will be our portion, we shall live on angels' bread. Oh! that we might see our darkness. We read, "the light shined in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." But if we are willing to let the light shine, it will show us our darkness—dispel the darkness; and as we yield to the light, it would dispel death from our souls. The light that was in our great pattern, was "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Thus we have the testimony of an experienced apostle, that we have the same light that Jesus had; because this light is God's law in us, that shows us the will of God: and as we are guided by it, it makes us the sons and daughters of God Almighty. And there is no other way, there never was, and there never can be, devised any other way; because it is the way that God Almighty has cast up, and it is so plain, that the wayfaring man cannot err in it. He directs all in this way: all are to be led on in obedience to the Lord Almighty. But, oh! this dedication!—how short we fall of coming up in it! I am willing to plead guilty with you. How we are trying to keep back a little. We are like Lot, we want a little spot spared; we are afraid to give up all; and although the Almighty may, for a season, indulge our weakness, yet it is not for us to tarry, any more than it was for Lot to tarry at Zoar. It was so near Sodom that he began to grow

afraid, and dare not continue in it.—So we must not continue in this indulgence, but go out into a wilderness state, and be content with what the Lord Almighty is pleased to cast up, by his light and law. For he does now as formerly :—“I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.”

Oh! that the Lord might lead us into this wilderness state, in which we could see no way of our own; in which nothing but darkness would surround us, till we should come to the light of his presence. Here, when we become willing to wait in self-abasement, under a sense of our own inability, then he will give us a vineyard from thence, and the valley of Achor—a valley of humiliation, where his honour dwells.

But we are too high in our own imaginations. I will do this thing, and I will do that thing. Oh! this great monster *I*, what mischief it is doing. This man of sin and son of perdition, takes the seat of God in our hearts; and there exalts itself above all that is called God, and sets up its own religion and worship in its own way. And here, like Jeroboam the son of Nebat, we make others to sin by our own example. All worship set up in man’s wisdom is like Jeroboam’s worship, an abomination in the sight

of God. How plain we can now see it, as the prophets of old saw it. The hireling looks for gain. And how much they are like Jeroboam, who set up an exalted place of worship, and for fear that they would go to Jerusalem to worship God, he made it to imitate the worship at Jerusalem. So it is with this building of seminaries, and entering into associations and bible societies. They are all in the same spirit as the worship of Jeroboam; and make the people to sin. It is all in the letter; all out of the spirit; for we cannot suppose or believe that the Almighty will have any connexion with such a heterogeneous mass of beings; composed of high and low, rich and poor, the warrior and the oppressor, Gog and Magog, rising up to make war upon him that "rides on the white horse."

Now we are called by a high and holy calling to bear testimony against these works of darkness. We are to have no fellowship with them; but to reprove them by our walk and works; and by our testimony and conversation at all times. For unless this comes to be the case with the few remaining upright minds that are mourning on account of these abominations, even those who have not yet fallen victims, must all fall together. Therefore, my spirit prays, that my brethren and sisters may rally to the standard; and by diligence and faithfulness, endeavour to open their eyes to see in the light;—to see the glaring wick-

edness of these things. Oh! may you take courage to hold up your testimony for the Lord and his cause upon the earth, and for your dearly beloved fellow creatures; and may prayers ascend for all those deceivers: for verily if we dwell in the love of the gospel, and under its influence, our prayers will ascend for all those deceived ones. O Lord, open their eyes; give them to see where they are, and to behold the abominations in which they are engaged.

But it seems as though the mighty destroyer was ready to draw down the stars of heaven, by the sweep of his tail. Antichrist is becoming so extended in the earth, that his tail seems to be encircling all regions, and ready to draw down a deluge of destruction. The followers of antichrist are endeavouring to gain strength by joining their forces, and were it possible, they would carry all before them. But the Lord will divide them; they cannot unite; they are made up of such brittle materials. Like the great image of Nebuchadnezzar, they cannot unite together. Like the toes and feet of that image, made part of iron, part of brass, and part of potter's clay, they will slowly crumble to pieces; when they endeavour to unite, they will crumble apart and cannot unite. There are none who can unite, but those who come under the operation of that little stone cut out of the mountain without hands;—we must come to know the

operation of it upon us. What is this little stone? Why, it is the kingdom of God in us; like a little leaven in the soul. This is the stone cut out without man's hands; it is nothing of man's contriving. It is in direct opposition to man in his own will, and in all his creaturely desires: but as we give way to its influence in our souls, it breaks down the spirit of self will, and lusting after power and glory—this strong desire to wield the arm of power in their own way. All this spirit of self will must be broken down by that little stone cut out without hands;—Oh! I say it must be broken down in each of us, individually, and it must grow and become a mountain, and fill the whole earth. It will be so if we are willing to be emptied of self, and let this little stone turn out one thing after another, and fill up the vacuity with its own self—its own light. So when it has bound the strong man armed, and cast him out, it will continue to work to spoil his goods. And when it has destroyed all, and burnt up all the combustible matter that the soul has been full of, as soon as a vacuum is produced, it fills it with its own power—the creature becomes new—a new birth is produced. This is what the Lord is about to do, and what he has been endeavouring to do in all ages since the fall, in order to gain his rightful prerogative in the hearts of men. And he will overturn and

overturn, till we come to yield, and till we are willing to let him come in.

Oh! my friends, let us keep in remembrance that he has imparted to us liberally a portion of his own power, by which we are enabled to make our election; and no power in earth can take it from us. It was the will of God that it should be so; and he being above all, none can take it from us. Therefore, I say it is an individual concern; and we ought as individuals, to consider well on this important point, and see how to use this great and blessed privilege, to make a right election. For all those who elect God for their portion, he will elect. Such as the poor in spirit, the mourner, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake: these are the ones whom the Lord will thus bless with his spiritual blessings;—and Oh! may we be among these my friends. My spirit prays for it. I look upon you with great love. It is likely this is the last time I shall see you here, or tread this floor; but my love for you is such, that I desire, after my decease you may remember these things, and realize them in your own experience. It has become my delight to do the will of God, and my glory to endeavour to promote his righteous cause. My soul craves it incessantly and continually, that his power may pervade the

earth, in the hearts of the children of men ; that it may break up their fallow ground, and prepare it to receive the kingdom of light and life —of God in the soul.

Oh ! that we were willing hearted ; and then he would do wonders for us. We read of the mighty miracles of Moses, in bringing the children of Israel up out of Egyptian bondage ; and the miracles of Jesus Christ ; but they all sink into nothing, when compared with what he works in the immortal souls of the children of men, when we gather inward to the power of God in our own souls. Here are miracles as much above those, as heaven is above earth. Miracles upon the souls of men, leading them out of sin and corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

What were Moses' miracles upon the children of Israel, when compared with the importance of one single soul ? One soul is worth more than all the external carcasses of the Israelites.

But people are so much in the letter, and so carnal, that they are looking backward to these outward miracles. Some may say, that if they had lived in the days of Jesus Christ, they could never have crucified him. Depend upon it, my friends, you would have been the first to have done it, for you are doing it now by looking back to external matter to find God, while he is in you ; and is able to work greater miracles for

you than he ever wrought in the sight of mortals. He would enable you to overcome all your wrong propensities and desires. And what a blessed liberty this would be from all the vain customs and fashions in which the children of men are enslaved. I mentioned a few of them, and leave the rest for you to consider.

In what I have said to you, you may all be pointed to the necessity of examining into your own states and conditions; to know where you are. By sincerity and diligence, these vanities may all be banished from the soul; and you will be brought to triumph over them all. You will be enabled to come into the simplicity of Jesus Christ; and into the holy cross, which is nothing but the divine law of light in the conscience, which crosses man's will, and calls him to come out of the world's ways, and friendships, and maxims.

How many inventions of men I might enumerate, and some of which grieve my soul. Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, and Agricultural Societies. What are they for, my friends? They are to gratify the pride and vanity of man, in his own selfish wisdom. There is nothing of God in them, I declare to you; and neither could you join them, were you passive to the divine will. Is he not already blessing us, with too many outward blessings? What more can we want? Would it not be a greater blessing to

limit our outward blessings? Was it right for Elijah to pray for drought? It seems as if it would be right to pray for our outward blessings to be limited; for we see the strongest proofs, that they lead to all kinds of wickedness, which can be invented by the children of men.

Have we not millions of bushels of the bread of life, more than we ought to have? Are we not wicked in distilling it into spirituous liquors? We ought never to have a bushel to spare for this purpose: and we should not have any to spare, if we were right, because we would not suffer this great evil to be in the land. But now, people are raising up themselves by gaining riches, through the medium of these intolerable things. Man was not designed for such an end, my friends; because, if he was, it would have a tendency to make him happy; but it all combines to make him more miserable. What vexations, what torture! How we mourn in our towns, at the drunkenness, gluttony, pride, and vanity, and cursing! And these are increased by joining societies, the effect of which is, to draw youth together, to make them love company, and to make them drunkards. Quietness and peace are the best for us. What do riches do? Why the apostle tells us, “do not rich men oppress you, and cause you to blaspheme that holy name, by which ye are called?” Do not the rich oppress the poor, so that they feel it, and are even ready

to curse them ; and to blaspheme against God, by being led into that which is not right. But although the rich may oppress the poor, still the poor should not curse them, or blaspheme that holy name.

Time would fail me, and strength would fail, to open all that my soul feels, in relation to these things. The light of Heaven is spread before my mind, causing my prayers to rise, that God will arise in the strength of his power, and drive away these mists of pompous darkness in which men are groping like a blind man at the wall, and know not whither they are going. But my time and strength would fail me,—and I am therefore, willing to draw to a close, if the Lord will. And, oh ! may we bow in deep humiliation of soul, and come into that universal love, that gathers all nations into one bond of love ; in which we might all unite and return thanksgivings to God Almighty, and take courage.

I greatly desire that the young people, both male and female, may no longer consult with flesh and blood as they do, and waste their time ; for every moment may be considered, worth a world to them. If they do not improve the moments as they pass, they may lose more than ten thousand worlds are worth. Oh ! my young friends, plead no longer with flesh and blood, to gratify yourselves with fine apparel. For what

do you say by your language and example? That the blessed Jesus, and the pious in all ages were all fools? Do you not rise up and bear pointed testimony against them and all their works? Here you are at least blameable. What led the pious in former ages into their simplicity? Was it not the love and fear of God; who limited his beloved son, by the influence of his spirit, so that he had no liberty to clothe and deck himself—no liberty to indulge in these things; but no doubt was led into that adornment—that simplicity, that was consistent with his Heavenly Father's will. But now we have grown so wise, that we think nothing of these things; we are not afraid to stand upon our own judgment.

Look at it, my friends; for I think I know a little of what I say; for I have been where you are now. I know the snares that beset your path, and I pity you. For it was the fear of God that dwelt in my soul, when I was young, that preserved me from running in the same way. I knew that it was not right for me to do as I pleased in these things; I knew that I was the Lord's, and that I ought to demean myself as his servant.

The vivacity of our animal nature drives us on to these things: but has not God placed in this tabernacle, an immortal soul, upon which he has impressed a desire after happiness; a de-

sire after that which will make our immortal soul happy? And we learn from this desire, and from our endeavours to satisfy it, that nothing mortal can do it. Let us do all we can, still this infinite desire, of the soul, is no more satisfied than when we first set out: nay, it is more tormented and unhappy than when we had nothing at all. Oh! that you might reflect upon these things, and learn to improve the gifts of a gracious God. If you will but meditate in his law, he will lead you to see, as I have seen, that these vanities lead away from God; and that they are in direct opposition to the doctrines and precepts of the wise and good in all ages. They were all led into simplicity. And why? Because truth is simple:—God is serious, and every right sense of man is serious; reason is serious, and if our reason was rightly improved, we should never indulge in any superfluity in our apparel. It shows that man has become a poor effeminate creature; that he is guided by the vanity of his mind. We have obvious evidence of this; for as soon as the soul becomes subject to the cross, and listens to the divine law, how distressing these things are! They are too nauseous to be borne: they are such a sore that we cannot abide them any longer, but cast them off like filthy rags.

Oh! do be persuaded by one who loves you, to turn inward to the truth in your own minds;

for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom ; which alone can preserve you from the snares of death ; and strengthen the understanding of your minds, so that you can resist every temptation, and meditate day and night, in the divine law, by which you will be led into simplicity and truth.

SERMON VII.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, BYBERRY, IN
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, ON FOURTH DAY MORNING, 8TH
OF TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

My mind, since we have been sitting silently together, has been led to a feeling view of the excellency of love; pure undefiled love; its dignity, its majesty, and its power. It stands over and above all: it is above all price;—it cannot be bought. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love; it would be utterly contemned. It was, no doubt, that which led the apostle, formerly, to address his brethren on this wise: “Let brotherly love continue.”

Now, what is this brotherly love, my friends?—this true brotherly love? I apprehend we may see something of it, in a family of children, all of the same parent; why, it leads and instructs all, and keeps all in their proper allotment, under the direction of a pious and wise parent, who begins with his children when young, very young; and if he is, as he ought to be, possessed of love,—his love to his tender offspring is equal to his love for his own soul. He begins with them, when they have a being, one after an-

other ; and he instructs them according to their age and preparation to receive instruction. And in a large family of brothers and sisters, there are many states, all somewhat different from each other, in point of age and acquirements ; the parent begins with the first, and leads them on, so that they are prepared to receive a different kind of instruction, and greater knowledge and information from him, than the younger brothers and sisters.

But here, if brotherly love prevails, no envy gets in ;—the younger do not envy the elder, because the father informs them of higher pursuits, which are beyond the reach of the younger, and which they cannot understand. And as they keep in love and fellowship and in obedience to the father, they are all content with his disposing toward them. They attend individually to their own lessons of instruction. Their meals are all meted out, in proportion, and in agreement with, their several states and conditions ; and yet there is a diversity in the whole, not all being capacitated alike for receiving instruction, or any thing else. The elder ones have their proper places in the family, all in regular gradation one above another.

The younger ones, seeing the elder advance beyond what they know and experience, are stimulated with a desire for this advanced state. As they keep in love to one another, it does

not raise any envy or dislike, but all go on in harmony. Now, these are the effects of pure undefiled love. This is that love, of which we read so much; the excellency of which is so highly desirable; and which is said to be stronger than death. Oh! its excellency, its dignity, and its power! What wonders it does in the creation! He that is the author of it, assigns of it, like a pious father dealing out to his children, to every one who is obedient to his manifested will, and agreeable to his state and condition to receive.

The elder will always be ahead in advancement, if he is equally obedient and faithful; and yet there is no envy, no strife: "for where envy and strife is, there is contention and every evil work." But in a well ordered family of children, these things cannot rise; for if they all stand in their proper places, envy hath no place; and strife is not known.

Now, my friends, there is nothing, I apprehend, that can keep families together, and preserve, harmony and concord, but love—all-powerful love. However, as I observed, we read much of it, and of its power and sufficiency; yet we cannot gain it through that medium. All that we can read and hear about it, gives us no possession at all. There is but one way in which we can come to know it; and be blessed with it. We cannot purchase it with money:

no, it is above all price. How are we then to obtain it, my beloved friends? There is but one only way—there never was but one only way;—and that is faithfulness and submission to the father's direction; faithfulness and submission to the father's discipline. For every prudent, godly, and wise parent has a discipline in his family. If he has wisdom to direct, and his children are obedient to his will, all will be subject to this discipline; subject to this law of the family; each standing in his own proper allotment, without grudging, and without envy. So it will be, and so it must be, with our Heavenly Father's family; for all his children must be taught of him. “The Lord's children are all taught of the Lord, in righteousness are they established, and great is the peace of these children.”

Here we have a view of the subject outwardly; but it gives us no possession at all. It is but the letter; it is not to be depended upon. We must come home within ourselves. We must come to know our hearts cleansed, purified, and emptied of every thing which is in opposition to this pure and holy principle. Now this is a great work. It is a work of God upon the soul: for man cannot do it himself.

We have all fallen away from this pure, undefiled love. There is another who has got possession of our hearts; the “strong man armed.” While he keeps the city, the goods are at peace:

but when a stronger than he comes in and turns him out, then he can spoil his goods.

What is stronger than the strong man? Pure, undefiled love is stronger; for God is love, and they that dwell in love, dwell in God, and God in them. Now here we may see and behold what to do. We feel and know, in ourselves, that while we are in a natural state; while we are unredeemed and not saved, our hearts are filled with many guests,—many beloveds. Here divine love cannot enter and get a place of residence. If it for a moment breaks in upon us, and makes us feel its excellency; it is soon crowded out by these many beloveds. We turn away our attention, and lose the feelings which are sometimes witnessed, while it is shed abroad in our hearts. Now, here the divine visiter manifests himself, and shows the design of his coming; that it is in order to bind the strong man in us, who has taken the seat of God and of love in our hearts;—the man of sin and son of perdition; or man's strong will, his strong and ungoverned passions, which have grown up in him, by indulging his propensities beyond truth and righteousness.

This is the strong man in the soul, which stands in direct opposition to God, and to pure undefiled love. It is selfish, and all it does is to gratify self: all it does while under the power of this man of sin and son of perdition, is to exalt itself, no matter how.

The great work which we have to do is, to turn to the Lord, when he is pleased to call upon us, to plead with us, as no doubt he has at times with all of us. We must endeavour to feel the mollifying influence of his love; we must listen and attend to this holy visiter. We must give way to him in our hearts, and permit him to dispossess the man of sin; for he has come to bind the strong man armed, and to turn him out; to clear our hearts of all our strong passions, uncultivated desires, and selfish will. We should therefore unite, with the operation of this divine principle of God in the soul. It is a living principle, it is the light and life, by which all the children of men are enlightened, and shown their condition. By it they discover the enmity that exists between this divine love, and the man of sin; for there is great enmity between the two seeds. One to bruise the head, and the other to bruise the heel. The man of sin and son of perdition cannot bruise the head; for the true head is the seed of God in the soul. He can do nothing but to undermine and deceive, by his working and deceptive power. Here every individual has a great work to do, under the leading and influence of this divine visiter, the light and love of God in our own souls. He comes in at times and seasons, when, in the cool of the day, the mind is a little retired from the continual exertions and buzzing about its own business. When-

ever it can find the soul in a state of quiet, it comes in, and makes it sensible of its condition. Blessed be his great and glorious name; he is visiting all the children of men with this divine love; for God is love:—and by this principle he works upon the children of men. By it, he endeavours to bring them off from that which is against his nature.

Man, in his fallen state, is a heap of hatred and opposition to divine love; and hatred and love cannot abide in the same place, at the same time. And as we yield to temptations, evil of every description arises in the soul, and stands in direct opposition to God, and his law and light. The great work, therefore, is to turn inward, and wait in holy silence to feel the arising of the pure light and love of God there; and in the same proportion as we yield, our love will begin to rise. It will break forth as the morning. Yea, if we are faithful to its divine influence, it will cause our darkness to be as the noon day, and thus our hearts will become emptied. They will become as a vacuum, when the divine love and light shall have banished all these evils; and when all combustible matter shall be turned out of the soul. This cannot all be done at once. It is a gradual work. In the figure, the Israelites did not drive all out at once, lest the beasts of the field should prey upon them. So with the souls of the children of men. The Almighty enters and

engages the soul, and turns its attention to itself. He shows it what is its first work. It is to do away this thing, that thing, or the other thing, which the light reveals to be inconsistent with the divine will. Here then, as we give up this enemy, to be slain and cast out, it leaves a vacuum in the soul, and this is filled with divine love; and so, as there is faithfulness to the divine light and manifestation in the soul, one enemy after another is overcome, and there is always something to fill up the place. The Lord in his loving kindness fills the vacuum, and enables us to go on from one degree of strength to another. Here we learn to know and understand what the apostle expresses of growing in grace; and in the saving knowledge of God our Saviour, step by step, like Jacob's ladder, by which we climb from earth to heaven. We are brought out of a state of wrath; a state in which envy and strife is, and contention, and every evil work.

We gradually rise out of these things; and as way is made, as I observed, evil is cast out, and good comes in and fills the vacuum, till the whole heart becomes renovated and renewed.

Here we come to witness the new birth. We read of a state in which man becomes a new creature; "he that is in Christ is a new creature." What is it to be in Christ? It is to come up into that righteousness which he came up into.

He had to war with temptations as we have. One temptation after another assailed him ; and as he overcame one, the divine light took place of it: just so it must be with us, if we are ever made fit for the kingdom of heaven. We must come to know all these things removed, before we can enjoy that pure undefiled love, where no envy or strife is, no contention or evil work. We are willing that every one should stand in his own allotment.

Therefore, “let brotherly love continue.” Let us be of the same mind to one another. How are we to be of the same mind? Does this mean that we are all to come to the same point? No. Because we are gradually advanced one above another. The elder brother has a mind to love the younger, when he is under the direction of the father ; and therefore the younger has the same mind to love the elder, in proportion as he is in his proper allotment, under the direction of his great parent. So it should be in societies. There should be no discord, because the individuals are in different situations ; they are all children growing up together ; some have, of course, experienced a great deal, some very little ; but this should not excite the envy of those who are so young as not to comprehend, what their elder brothers have attained to. That love, which is stronger than death, keeps down envy and strife, and every one in his proper allotment,

is willing to let others do as he would have them do to him.

Now to the want of this spirit of love, in the minds of the children of men, may be attributed all the persecutions in the world, on a religious account. Because if men were willing to subject their wills to the divine will; if we are desirous of being the Lord's children, we must be obedient to his law. And therefore, as he has but one law, which is a law of righteousness in every soul, it is a law that is clear and perfect; so that every individual that attends to this inward law, has the will of God manifested to him. For no outward thing can manifest the will of God. If we believe what we read, and what we know in ourselves, nothing can teach us the things of God but the spirit of God. Nothing can write God's law upon our hearts but the finger of God. There it is, then, that we must gather as the only place of safety; there the work is to be done. It is there, we find our enemy, if we have any, and there we must find our friend. But people are too generally, looking outwardly to find God; and in this outward looking they are told about a devil; some monstrous creature, some self-existing creature, that is terrible in power. Now, all this seeking to know God, and this devil, or the serpent without, is the work of darkness, superstition, and tradition. It hath no foundation: it is all breath and wind, without the pow-

er. We need not look without for enemies or friends; for we shall not find them without. Our enemies are those of our own household: our own propensities and unruly desires are our greatest, and I may almost say, our alone enemies. And yet, in themselves, they are all good; because man could not give himself propensities or desires; and therefore, as there is but one being who creates, and as he is perfect in wisdom and holiness, and as he is nothing but pure and undefiled love, he could create nothing but that which is good. If nothing can create but this undefiled love, all that we feel and, all that we have, when we turn inward, is the work of this Almighty creator, who has stamped it upon man, and made him a twofold creature, consisting of a body and a spirit—matter and spirit. He has impressed upon the immortal soul of man, propensities and desires, suited to its nature, and suited to the design of its creation and existence. He has impressed upon our animal bodies propensities and passions suitable to their nature, to lead us to provide for what we stand in need of. Nothing could impress these upon the creature, but God Almighty who creates; because man cannot create any thing, or make any addition to that which God has given him. Neither is there any power under Heaven, which can alter the state of man, beside man himself and his Creator. And as God is over all, and is

perfectly good, he could not possibly create evil; and therefore, we must seek for the way in which, and the place from whence this evil arises, in some other quarter. We must not look outwardly for it, but inwardly.

Here we find that we are possessed of desires and propensities of various kinds, and a great many of them; and yet they are all absolutely necessary, as our being is necessary. Here we shall find out that which will banish all superstition and tradition from our souls: we shall find out that God is the only great good; that all evil arises from our disobedience to him, and from our abuse of his blessings. He has made man a twofold creature; one part mortal, the other immortal. The mortal tabernacle and the immortal spirit within, can never unite one with the other; they must stand eternally distinct from each other; and therefore, the immortal spirit has its independent nature, distinct from matter, because it comes from God. In old days it was seen to be so. These poor bodies of clay must return to the earth from whence they were taken, and the spirit to God who gave it. The soul, when disengaged from the body, returns to the world of spirits, to give an account of its deeds, while an agent under God, in the animal body, with authority to direct it as wisdom should dictate. We see that it is not in the animal body to reason. No: it is not in bones to think, or

flesh to reason. It is the immortal soul only that is accountable to God. For its own propensities are limited by the light of God in itself; and its duty is to keep in subordination the animal body, so as not to suffer it to get angry, or do any thing contrary to this light. It is to keep it down within its proper limits. And how natural these things are, my friends, if we reflect upon them. They are as plain as A, B, C. You would find you never were tempted by a devil without you, but by a devil within you. What is the devil? It is that cunning, twining wisdom,—that serpentine wisdom of man. Man is a being who is made a free agent, and with propensities, out of which, he is to grow up into a more glorious state. But by indulging them beyond the bounds of wisdom and of truth,—here is where the evil begins—here comes in that that does us mischief. What makes a drunkard, but the soul's indulging the animal passion after drink, which taken to excess produces drunkenness? It is nothing but the excess that makes the drunkard. Here now we see where sin begins; here we see where devils are created, by man himself; he is the author of them all; as he is the only fallen angel upon earth. What produces the glutton, the adulterer, the fornicator, the covetous, the liar, the thief, but an excess in the indulgence of propensities, which lead us to seek for that which is necessary for us? We should always keep

within the limits of truth and wisdom, and never suffer our propensities or desires to carry us beyond what God in his wisdom intended to be our limits; and thus all our passions would be kept in their proper allotments.

Man was created and placed in a garden of trees—full of trees—which he was to dress, and keep them in order. And what were the trees in the garden of Eden? They were the propensities of man, in his animal body. These are the trees that will grow, if they are not kept down by pruning. You know how necessary it is for the wise husbandman, by care and the use of the knife, to keep his trees pruned; and if any bud shoots out improperly, he rubs it off, and keeps all smooth. If he suffers it to grow, it may be injurious to the tree, and may require the knife. Just so it is in a spiritual sense, if we attend to the trees of the garden; if we watch over them with diligence, and watch every growing propensity, as it grows stronger, and the soul increases in knowledge. As the desire of knowledge grows stronger, we are to keep it down, and never let the mind rise, to exercise its own ability to decide for itself, but wait in humility on the heavenly Father to know his will. Let the business be great or small, still it must be under the dominion and control of the heavenly Father.

Here we see how the blessed Jesus went on,

and how he began. He said he did not come to do his own will, but the will of the Father, that sent him. Just so with us, my friends; this is the end of our coming into the world, not to do our own will, but the will of him that has blessed us with this state of being, and endowed us with these passions, which bring about our probationary state. We feel that we are placed in a state of probation; and we feel and know that it is done by our Creator; and, therefore, we must conclude that it is the best situation in which infinite wisdom and perfect justice could have placed us. There could have been nothing more excellent; for if there could have been, our gracious Creator would have placed his creature man in the best situation—in the best possible state to effect the great end of his creation. Therefore, this probationary state, is the best state that infinite wisdom could have selected, to effect the great design.

Well now, there must be something to bring about this probation; and has there been any thing that any of us ever knew of, but these propensities and desires, that are a part of our common nature? I challenge the whole host of mankind, to find any thing but our own propensities and desires. And as man could not give to himself these propensities and desires, we have the evidence along with them, that they were given to us by our Creator, as the best possible medi-

um, through which to effect his great end. He made us innocent creatures, and placed us here on earth, and had we been content in that state, we should have remained mere machines.—That being, which is the creature of another, if he is made complete at once, without the liberty of exercising free agency, is a mere machine. But contrary to all the rest of creation, the Creator made and endowed us with the power of electing for ourselves. He gave us passions—if we may call them passions—in order that we might seek after those things which we need, and which we had a right to experience and know. Yet, not without laying a restriction upon the immortal soul, saying, “thus far shalt thou go, and no farther;” as was the charge to our first parents, when placed in the garden. They were endowed with a soul, which was to be kept in subjection; which was to be kept under the divine direction in all its propensities, and not to allow them to exceed due bounds. Here is the probation of the soul; and the only possible one, by which it could rise out of an innocent state, into a virtuous and a glorious one: to be an inhabitant of Heaven; to be a communicant with its Creator, and the God of its existence and life.

Oh! my friends, how glorious the view—I say, how glorious the view, when we are brought to witness and to see how divine wisdom intended we should rise from a state of mere innocen-

cy, into a state of glorification, by a conquest over all its enemies ; over every thing which could obtrude itself upon the soul, or divert it from its proper duty.

We need not look outward to find a devil ; we shall find enough in us. We read that there were seven devils cast out of **Mary Magdalene**. She had been a vile woman, who was given to a multitude of evil propensities, by the indulgence of which, she was brought completely under the power of them. Her rational spirit became enlisted in the service of the passions ; and seven propensities had been indulged in, till they became as devils to her. Here she went counter to the divine will. So now, Jesus quelled all these, and brought her into a sense of her desperate state. As she believed on him, and looked to him for help,—as she gave up to him, he banished the evil spirits from her soul—he bound the strong man armed, and cast him out ; and as she was faithful, and sat down in humiliation at his feet, he spoiled all his goods. This produced a vacuum ; and this vacuum was filled with the holy presence. **The Lord Almighty** came in, in lieu of it, to reign over all. And these were all the devils that were cast out ; they were the passions which were inimical to man's happiness.

The leprosy was a disease, and such was the superstition of that day ; such the darkness and

ignorance, that they were led to suppose, that there was some devil from without that had brought this disease upon them. This disease, and many others, were cleansed from the people by Jesus. He took upon him to cleanse the people—he cured the lunatic. And what is lunacy? It is a failing in man, it is a disease, which was then, may be now, and even is, sometimes supposed to be, by the foolish and credulous a spirit—an evil spirit.

These things should show us our infirmity; and teach us to trust in the Lord our God, for salvation and strength; believing that if we in early life begin to attend to these things; to the divine law, and the visitations of the holy spirit, all these things would be banished. But for the want of this, our imperfections lead us to turn away from him, who alone can save us; and thus are we led astray and deluded.

This we must conclude if we believe the scriptures, and our own experience: “They that trust in the Lord, shall never be confounded.” So that the great business of life, to the children of men is, to turn inward, to the witness of God in their own souls. We have many demonstrations of this in the letter: but what does the letter do? What has it ever done? It can do nothing. It is not a cause, but an effect. It might have a tendency, if we were willing-hearted, to attend to the divine grace, to push us to it; to di-

rect us to it ; but it can do nothing more. The grace of God is the only thing that can produce the salvation of the soul of man : “ For by grace are ye saved, through faith.” We must not expect that the grace of God will save us, without faith in its sufficiency. There is but one way that I ever found, and that is, to be obedient to its teachings, and attentive to its operation upon the mind. As we attend to it, it will open our understandings ; we shall learn to know its excellency ; and in proportion as we are attentive to it, we shall love it for its excellency and goodness. “ For by grace are ye saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God.”

How then shall we undertake to give a brother or a father a belief? If we do it, what wicked and presumptuous creatures we are, because we take the place of God. We assume the place of God when we tell our brother, this is the right way ; my opinion is just right, and if thou do not come into it, thou art a heretic. A brother who does this, must be void of christian love ; otherwise he would never assume such a stand. He has not that love which leads every one to do what he thinks is right in the sight of his Heavenly Father. If they do not see as he does, it may be because they are not fit to see as he does. They are not prepared in their own hearts. They are not enough subjected, so as to bring them to experience what their brother has expe-

rienced ; and yet in this darkness they would presume to rule their brother. Here is no brotherly love existing. Look at it now, if we should suppose that some one should say, "My brother, thou must be constrained to come into my views." The brother says : " Not so, but thou must come into my views." Here now, contention and discord would enter, and every evil work prevail : but on the contrary, were they under the influence of brotherly love, they would be willing to say, each to the other, " mind thy own business ; thy Father hath given thee thy portion, and let it be what it may, be thou faithful. Do not mind me ; I am not to be thy teacher ; I am not to be an example to thee, any further than my example corresponds with what God commands thee to do."

Let us encourage each other, in pursuing the path of duty, as laid out by our Heavenly Father, and none else does know it. As long as we believe in the light, and continue to walk in the light, our intentions become settled and firm ; that we will do nothing but that which is right. We shall endeavour to pursue the right way in all things ; to do all the good we can, and as little harm as possible, in the world. These are resolutions which the divine light brings the soul into, when it comes under its regulating influence. It brings the soul into its own nature, to do nothing but the

right thing. This will be its steady aim. But as finite creatures, though we might have no other motive than that of doing good; yet it is possible we may mistake, and do an injury in our dealings with others. But when our motives are correct, and we suppose that we are doing the best thing; but through a want of previous knowledge we do that which injures a brother, yet if he knows the sincerity of our heart, and believes that we are always striving to do the best thing; it would make no uneasiness, no breach of brotherly love among us. Each one would continue to pursue his own straight course, with nothing in view, but to do all the good he could, and as little hurt as possible.

This is an excellent religion, when men are willing to come to it.

These things have arisen from a view of the preciousness, the dignity, and majesty of divine love, as it has opened to me, since I stood up; although, I saw but little when I first rose, but to endeavour to lead our minds home, that we might be enabled to act with propriety towards one another; for I am clear, that it would be impossible for any thing to disturb our peace, however different our views, if we were acting under the influence of pure undefiled love. We should all harmonise and rejoice together, my beloved friends; we should become as one family of love; and should experience the testimony,

that “the Lord’s children are taught of the Lord, and great is the peace of these children.” But when we look around and see how little righteousness there is among us, we are afraid to look; we see so many inconsistencies, we hardly dare look,—we are afraid to examine. That even when an individual under the best concern or exercise, is led to point out to us the enormities we are guilty of in this land, they seem ready to turn it behind their backs. Then what must be done? Let us “try all things; prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” Did we enter into a close investigation of the one great principle of actions—justice, we should see how far we are in the performance of our duty to our fellow creatures. For we must be just before we are generous. There can be no charity, no virtue, which has not justice for its foundation.

Let us then inquire, are we doing any thing that oppresses them; are we doing any thing that strengthens the hand of the oppressor? Look to it my friends. You know that the receiver and the thief are considered equal. He that receives stolen goods is just as guilty as the one who steals them. Now, how oppression reigns in our land; and how many goods there are which are even worse than stolen goods.

I appeal to your common sense, my friends, whether to make a man labour and bring forth to us his goods, is not worse than stealing. There-

fore he that partakes of these stolen goods, is worse than the common thief. Our common understanding would dictate this to us, was it not for the prejudice of education and tradition. But when we become accustomed to any thing, however evil it may be, if it has been sanctioned by usage, we find it extremely difficult to abandon it; and particularly, where we are individually interested in it. We are not willing to believe it. We do not want to see these things, and turn our backs to a serious search. In this case it is not difficult to know our duty, because the matter is so clear and plain: and there cannot be an individual who is willing to stand as an upright man or woman, but would be willing, if possible, to know where they were falling short. For they that can strengthen the hand of the oppressor in the least degree, how can this divine love come in, and fill their hearts, while they manifest a hatred to their fellow creatures? They who strengthen the hand of the oppressor, evidently manifest a hatred to the oppressed. There are many ways in which we oppress. This land is guilty of the oppression of human beings, and the crime lies as a dark cloud upon the nation.

I consider it the duty of every individual to search into this subject. Oh! my friends, let us strike at the very bottom; and may we be led to go on hand in hand in the work. Let us join hand in hand in the resolution to do good;

and we shall be stimulated, to do all that we can to put an end to this cruel oppression in our land. Where injustice now reigns, justice would come up in its dignity and power; and the oppressed would be relieved. The chains would be released from the necks of our fellow creatures; justice would be exalted, and come up to reign over all. We have hardly got our hands clear of our oppressed fellow creatures, and we sit down in ease, and keep encouraging those who are engaged in this cruel traffic. What is the difference whether I hold a slave, or purchase the produce of his labour from those who do? If I deal moderately with him, would it not be better to hold him myself?—I say, would it not be better to keep one in a moderate way?

Look to this, my friends. I see the scales that are upon the eyes of the people;—their prejudices are such, that it requires something powerful to break the scales from off their eyes. But let us make the case our own, and then we shall begin to see through a more impartial medium. Now here are dear parents, the fathers and mothers of children. Suppose the tyrant should tear from you your dear sons and daughters, take them into the next county, put them under the iron yoke, and lash them every day, and deprive them of every liberty and enjoyment; and above all, the liberty of free agency, without which all other blessings are not

worth enjoying; for nothing can be a blessing to a slave in this world. Look at it, my friends, and say, whether you could go over the line of a county, and traffic, and buy the produce of your tender offspring, who, through toil and bloodshed, had been compelled to labour at a tyrant's will. And is not the principle still the same, if we go a little further, and buy the produce of our fellow creatures, who are not so nearly connected? Are we not all brethren? Have we any better right to oppress one who is not our immediate brother or sister, than we have to oppress one that is?

Oh! that we might learn wisdom, before our iniquity becomes our ruin! I say there is a black cloud hanging over us, and I can see no advancement that we can make till this greatest of evils is removed. There are many other evils and acts of injustice in the line of commerce and trade with one another, where we impose on one another, and do manifest injustice; but these are so trivial and small compared with this great one, that I have little hope of improving in this respect, till the greater evil is banished from our land. And how quick it might be effected, were justice to reign—if we were all willing to be just men and women.

Are we to reason about consequences, when the divine light shows us our sins? If we leave off this sin, this or that will be the consequence;

the tyrant may suffer by it ; we shall be taking away his living. Is this good reasoning ? What matter is it about the tyrant ? We are called upon to do that which is right and just ; and are not to consider what the consequence will be.

What if a thief should say to himself, " Now God calls on me to leave off this sin ; but I have been stealing a great while, and if I leave off this sin, I shall have no way to live." What should we think of an individual who would undertake to reason with the Most High in this way ? We know he could not find favour in his sight. When we have sufficient evidence, we need not look any higher. When our own understanding testifies to us that we are wrong, that we are unjust and unrighteous, shall we then wait for revelation ? Why it would be casting an indignity upon him, who gives us these lesser means, to convince us with the clearest demonstration. Our own common sense is a sufficient evidence, and we need not look any higher. If we know an act to be unjust, no matter how we come by the knowledge ; even if a child in the neighbourhood, should tell us of it, if we have evidence in ourselves that the child has spoken the truth, we have no need to look for higher evidence, because this may be the means under Heaven, by which our eyes should be opened.

Whenever we come to the knowledge of a truth, no matter by what means, it is time then

for us to attend to it, and to leave off our injustice, if we are guilty of any. It is enough that we are convinced, even if it were by an inanimate thing; or if we are brought to see as Balaam was, by means of an ass. We have no right to look any higher, when we are convinced that any thing is the truth, and nothing but the truth.—Well is it not so? Can we want to go any where to be informed of our duty in this matter? Can any people have a better view of a subject than we have of this? Could we know it better if we should ascend into Heaven? No. Not any thing in Heaven can make it plainer than it is. All revelation, and all that is rational, can prove no more; for our common sense proves indubitably that slavery is the most cruel and most wicked of all things. We have the most self-evident proof; and in the great day of account, we dare not make the plea, and say, the Bible did not reveal it to me. The question will be, didst thou not see it by the light of reason, that was communicated to thee? Did not thy common understanding convince thee? And still thou wouldst not believe! But we are not willing to believe, unless the Almighty will convince us by some great miracle. We are like the Jews, when they would not believe the miracles of Jesus Christ. His disciples wanted him to bring down fire from Heaven. But he would not indulge them.

We know, to the utmost certainty, what slavery is, and not any thing in Heaven can make it plainer than it is.

If we know it to be unjust, will we still wait for the Lord to tell us it is so? He will never do it; for he has already done it, by the means which he appointed for that purpose. But being unjust to man in our common way of life—being, too many of us, in the way of darkness, we can have fellowship with the works of darkness; although we are called out of it all.

I know not how to leave this subject, for my soul is in it. Oh! may it be our desire and our resolution, my friends, willingly to take up the cross and despise the shame;—although individuals may point the finger of scorn at us, and say it is a little thing—don't let us regard these things. We are not accountable to man, but to our Creator, who is doing every thing to make the way plain and intelligibly clear to us.

Can we have christian love, and strengthen the hand of an oppressor? Be sure we cannot. my friends. We are void of it, because we delight in gratifying ourselves. Oh! may we, individually, sink deep into the consideration. Try these things, my friends, and search for yourselves. I do not desire, as a brother, to impress my opinions upon you; but only to give you my views, and leave them as a mirror for you to look into. I would not have any turn to

my views, merely because they are mine; but because they are convinced of the irresistible truth of them. If they do not see as I do, it does not break my love with my fellow creatures. I am thankful—and this is the very pearl of my life—that I feel and continue to feel, nothing but love to flow to every creature under Heaven. Oh! how precious it is. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him;”—that love him with that pure love, that hath all power, both in Heaven and in earth. Love is stronger than death, but jealousy is more cruel than the grave.

I have never known or witnessed any evidence of fallen angels, but those who are fallen men and women. I believe there never were any other on this earth. Those whom the Lord has called, and who have been made partakers of the good things and power of the world to come, these when they fall away and become apostates, are fallen angels. For what are angels, but messengers? As it is said: “He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

Now we ought to take warning, my friends, till we become established. Not but that I believe there is an arriving at a state of establishment beyond falling. But few arrive at it for want of faithfulness. Many make a good be-

ginning, but too few hold out to the end. It is not enough to begin well, and to run well for a while ; but we must persevere. For it is only those who endure to the end, that shall be saved. Now, those whom the Lord has blessed, and who have advanced in some degree to be his people ; and whom he has enabled by his grace to become useful in their day ; do sometimes fall off. Are not these fallen angels ?

Oh ! let us deeply consider these things. Ever remember that it is not enough to begin well. How many there were brought out of Egypt, through the wilderness, who, nevertheless, never entered into the promised land. They were afraid, they lost their confidence, when they came on the borders of Canaan. So it is with many who set out in the christian travel. They go on well for a while ; but when their life and all is to be given up, they fail. When we enter the conflict, and our lives are ready to be taken from us, how many ten thousands there are, in the present day, who, like the Israelites, have rebelled against God, and turned away from their former confidence. Let me repeat it again. It is not enough to begin well : it is not enough to run well for a while, and to get through the wilderness, and in a good degree towards a state of establishment ; because the greatest trial that we find, is at the end of the conflict ; when we come to the point where all must be given up ; where

our lives must be considered as nothing to us. See our great example; he had his conflicts, his trials, and temptations; when his life and all was to be given up. How trying the scene! how painful! He was brought to cry out, in anxious concern to his Father. Yea, in his prayer, he was brought to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and nature felt the desire to escape this suffering. “If it be possible, Father, let this cup pass from me.” But see the example—“not my will, but thine be done.” Oh! believe me, here in this trial many shrink back, and become as dead lights.

Oh! may we be encouraged to faithfulness: Oh! may we be led in due time, to see our own insufficiency, and to cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” These things we must go through, if we continue to the end. If we persevere in faithfulness, we must be brought to the time in which all must be given up: yea, the death of the cross must be our experience. Therefore, let us take courage and persevere on, whether life or death, let us keep our eye single to the divine light, to our holy leader, and he will carry us through, over all, to name the name of that great and adorable name. Let us, therefore, in confidence of this, be willing to thank God and take courage.

SERMON VIII.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, NEWTOWN, IN
BUCKS COUNTY, ON FIFTH DAY MORNING, 9TH OF TWELFTH
MONTH, 1824.

SOME men and some women seem to show an aversion to all order and discipline, as if it was not necessary, since we are all to be governed by one principle and power in us; as though it would be right for every one to be left to act independently one of another. This must arise from a want of a right knowledge of ourselves, and of the God that made us.

The first step to true knowledge, is to know ourselves. But do we, individually, improve the understanding that we are blessed with, by our great Creator? Do we improve by the things that we see, and hear, and know? Did we do this, we should come to have a true knowledge of ourselves, and of the great Author of our being. We should come to know and believe, that he is a being perfect in knowledge; and that by him all our actions are weighed. Now to come to know this is no secret; it is no hard thing, nor is it difficult; because we may learn it by our every day's experience. We learn it from a

consciousness within us, of having done right or wrong; because whenever we do amiss, and turn aside from the path of rectitude, we find something in us, that impeaches us, that brings guilt and remorse upon us. Now what is this, my friends? It certainly is something invisible to the outward senses of animal man; yet we know it to exist in us. There is nothing more self-evident to us than this fact; and here it is, then, through this medium, that we are to get right knowledge, right ideas, and right views of the divine character. As he is perfect in wisdom and knowledge; so he is a God of order. We behold this, even with our external eyes, when we behold the heavens, and the earth, the moon and the stars; and when we behold them continuing in that beautiful order, in which he arranged them by his eternal laws.

Although these vast bodies of inanimate matter, can be in no respect accountable in themselves, for their conduct, still we see them so arranged by infinite wisdom, and placed in such beautiful order, that they never interfere with each other. They never run foul of one another: and when we consider them rightly, they bring us to see, that these inanimate bodies may be considered as social beings, having intercourse with each other, and helping each other, by which they are continued in that excellent order, in which they were originally arranged.

Behold the outward sun, how wonderfully it operates upon the earth and upon our bodies, by its light and heat. It emits them powerfully, not only upon man, but upon the beasts and herbs of the field. These great bodies, these vast orbs, though inanimate in themselves, have a most wonderful effect upon every thing around them. What would become of us, and of our earth, were it not for the enlivening beams of the sun? Although it emits so much, yet it never lessens. It is like an epitome for us; it is like an index for us to act by, as social beings. If we were willing to exercise the power that God has given us, and to keep in that arrangement and order, which he has fixed for his creature man, how we might emit blessings, and yet lose nothing. Every thing that goes from us returns again to us, just as the light and heat that the sun gives to us, returns back to the fountain from whence it came. He never lessens in consequence of what he imparts to others, but his power and his excellence always continue the same.

And how we may be instructed by the movement of the earth, in its eccentric orbit around the sun. When it passes away from the sun, it enters into a colder region; and if the light and heat were taken from it, its weight would become much greater, and being heavier, it would be thrown from its proper orbit, and of course,

it might run foul of other bodies. But we see, that in the arrangement of divine wisdom, it returns again ; it comes round into its proper place. So it has been through all ages past, and so it will continue, through the eternal ages to come.

All the heavenly bodies will keep in that arrangement, which eternal and infinite wisdom designed for them. We see these vast orbs of light ; the moon and stars ; and we have the most indubitable evidence and circumstances, to prove, that all the light which the moon has, is derived from that sun, from which we derive our light ; and it is acted upon according to divine wisdom. Here we see harmonious and social commune, in these inanimate bodies.

What great teaching ! how wonderful the discovery ! Here now, man, although in himself small, when compared with the earth, and these vast bodies of matter, still, has something in him, which is immortal ; something which came from God, and which must return to him. Our immortal spirits receive all their light from that celestial and invisible Sun, which is the creator of all things. He emits of his excellency to us ; and yet he does not lessen, but remains eternally the same ; for all that comes from him will return to him again. There is a continual circulation, the same as we witness upon the earth on which we live. All the rivers which run to the sea, and to the mighty ocean, comprehending

all the waters of the earth, return back through invisible channels, to replenish the fountains and to renew their former course, in rivers and streams. So it will be with us, as accountable creatures to our God ; for we have nothing but what comes from God ; nothing but what has emanated from his love ; and therefore we are accountable to him, for all we have received.

Now, when we feel the warming beams of the Sun of righteousness ; the great source of all perfection, of all light and knowledge, and of every thing that can console a rational mind ;— when we are filled with his goodness, when it shines upon the soul and enlightens and warms it, still nothing is lost from the great fountain, because, as the soul is attentive, it will return all back again, as a tribute to him.

Here then, we learn and come to know and understand, that man, as a social being, must be regulated by order and discipline ; for as God is perfect, in all knowledge and wisdom, so he will remain to be a God of order. No doubt it will be so perfect, that it will certainly prevent his rational creatures from running foul of one another ; as we see in relation to the heavenly bodies, that they never run foul of each other. They, however, impart to, and receive from, each other, to their mutual benefit, and by it they are but answering the grand design. When we look at comets in their unknown path, be-

yond our feeble comprehension ; how reasonable it is to suppose, that, in passing through the immense space allotted to them, they impart to the bodies, by which they pass, and likewise, that those various and distant orbs return something to them, which they with equal fidelity transmit to the sun, upon whom they are themselves dependent.

Just so, rational beings are made social beings, that they may be a blessing to each other ; that each may impart something to his fellow, in return for what he may himself receive. Each can be doing good to the other ; and if they are kept under the influence of divine love, there never will be any jumbling ; and they never will run foul of each other. It is impossible, in the nature of things. Therefore, there would be no fault found, respecting right order and discipline, in the associations of the children of men ; and especially among those who are considered religious communities and associations. In these associations, order and discipline are not only requisite, but absolutely necessary ; they cannot do without them. But this discipline and order must be that which is fixed by the divine lawgiver ; and then if there is any occasion found to violate it, it must be in consequence of its having been perverted by the children of men. Now here we may see that the great end and design of the Almighty is, to have order among the children

of men. We can see the necessity of it, whatever our profession may be ; and so necessary and important is it, that there cannot be a happy family without it, among the children of men. God forbid. It is impossible.

Every pious parent, every one who has a right to be considered a child of God—and none can be considered so, but those who are led by the spirit of God—will see the absolute necessity, and they will be led by the light in their own souls, to form a discipline for regulating and ordering their families. And if it arises from divine light in the soul, it will be so arranged among the several branches, that they will never blunder over one another, or hurt, or wound one another. Therefore, all the fault that can be found, must arise from a counterfeit of its meaning, suiting it to their own desires—their own aggrandizement,—to make them lords in their several places.

Here it is, that many schemes of order and discipline, which are set up, stand in direct opposition to the order of God, and therefore they are soon found fault with, and very justly so ; because they must lead to disorder instead of order. To know right discipline, there is but one way, and that is, to investigate ourselves with the light and understanding with which we are blessed. We must do this, for this is the way to trace causes by their effects. Man is the effect of

God's love; the effect of God's power; and the design of the Almighty, who is an all-wise being. And here now, as this effect is rightly known; as we consider rightly and under a right direction, with respect to our real being, we are brought to see that God has made us all equal, by which social order comes to be established, and right discipline. We thus become confirmed in such a way, that we never injure one another, in our progress through this probationary state. But as far as we keep to it, we are constantly emitting something, like the planetary orbs of a lower order, which receive their light from the sun.

The glorious sun may be considered as a representation and index of the Holy One: the moon and stars are acting under divine direction, and like so many beings, and always emitting a part, in regular order, as designed by omnipotence. We see and observe, that the moon, although it is so far distant from us, has an effect upon our earth, and upon us; which shows the wisdom of the Almighty, through which, by his infinite power, he keeps all things in order, according to his great design.

We see these vast inanimate bodies moving in this holy order, and cannot but admire the magnificence, the beauty and the harmony of the whole. Then should we not be concerned to know our own orbit, in the great family of man-

kind; that we might be enabled to move in our proper place, and never interrupt a brother or a sister, or cause a jumble in the creation of God?

I am confirmed in the belief, that if we were individually concerned, to turn inward to the divine light, we should be enabled to accomplish this. For there is nothing that can instruct us in this line of order, but what may be seen, by the emitting of his light and power into our souls in our separate orbits. As the moon receives all its light from the sun, for itself, in the first place, so by that means it is enabled to emit a part of the power received, to the next orb; and here the heavenly order is kept up. So it has been through all the previous eternal ages, and so it will continue to all future ages. The order of God cannot be broken; and therefore we conclude, from these reflections, that all the endless regions of unmeasured space, are filled up with worlds, containing suns, moons, stars, and the like, according to the divine ordering; and that these are passing through from one to another, as social beings. We may in a degree consider so, and that by the great first cause acting upon them, they are kept in that holy order, in which divine wisdom placed them.

We cannot conceive that there is a vacuum, but that every part of the boundless regions of unmeasured space, is filled up and supplied in its proper order. Because if there was a vacuum

in any part of this unmeasured space, and nothing occupied the place, these vast orbs might be likely to scatter off, into that portion of unlimited space.

No, my friends, all is filled according to the wisdom and goodness of God ; and all is operating together, to effect his great purpose. How much we might learn from these views, if we would be consistent, and investigate rightly. Each individual of us may be considered as a microcosm, a little world, in which there is contained a kingdom, where the Almighty works and acts, leads and directs. And were it not for our stubborn resistance, he would lead us in such a way, that we should always move under the all-wise direction of the Supreme Ruler : and thus we should be kept right, and we should never run foul of each other, or in any way injure each other. Then that holy harmony intended by the Creator would be preserved. But when we attempt to set up order, contrived in our own wisdom, it has a contrary effect ; for it divides but does not unite.

Now, we are not to complain of right order and discipline, because it is abused, under the hypocritical pretence of those who want to be their own orderers and directors ; who, in their own wisdom, form creeds of faith, opposed to the direct order of truth and wisdom. They are all in darkness ; they all lead to death and discord ; but

it does not follow that because the order which is set up in man's wisdom, is not productive of concord and harmony, that all order is therefore unnecessary. No, my friends, this is going to the other extreme. I delight in order; and I have found the blessed benefit of it in myself. We have a great need of order in ourselves, and we have a great deal to govern. All the propensities and desires which we feel moving so powerfully in us, are to be governed and kept within due bounds; and we cannot do this, unless the immortal spirit is under the immediate direction of our Creator, and completely passive to his power. We must come to be like the inanimate earth, and other inanimate bodies which have no will of their own. They never diverge from the order which God designed. They preserve the order which he allotted to them; and this shows us, that if we would become subject to right order, we must first come to the same passive state; we must come to be like the inanimate earth. That is, we must feel that we have no capacity to do any thing, or to seek wisdom, only as it comes from the Holy One. For as all knowledge is comprehended in him, therefore man cannot devise any wisdom or knowledge, from any other source, but this eternal source; that is, from the light and spirit of God in our souls.

All other wisdom is foolishness with God. Every kind of wisdom which we derive from

without, by the exercise of our free agency, is foolishness with God ; and leads us to run foul of each other, and make a jumble in God's creation. It turns all things upside down; and instead of enabling us to answer the end of our creation, by glorifying God and enjoying fellowship with him ; it engenders strife and contention, and every evil work by which man can be made miserable on earth.

It is the hardest part of man's work, while in this probationary state, to be willing to become nothing, or to be any thing that the Lord is pleased to make him. It is hard for us to come down to do what we consider his righteous work without looking for a reward for doing it. Now look, my friends, for a moment. Can such men and women, who are looking for a reward, be any thing but selfish creatures? Do they not love themselves better than they love God? If he will not reward them, they would turn their backs upon him. What a contemptible state is this! We will only do righteously because we are to be rewarded for it, and cease to do wickedly because we must be punished for it. Do we not see, that while this is the case and condition, we are selfish creatures, alienated and separated from God? When we get into a right state, and come to be passive, like those inanimate bodies, then we shall be willing to be regulated by his law and light.

Here now we see the difference between those inanimate bodies, and the creatures which God has endued with an immortal part, or with that understanding and knowledge, which was necessary to effect the great and glorious end of their creation. Yet all must be in subservience to the divine mind of the great preserver of his creatures. Here now, when we come to search ourselves, and behold our own impotence and weakness; and to find that of ourselves we can do nothing aright, we shall be brought to the conclusion that there is but one good, and that is God ; that there is but one who knows good, and that is God. Man can never know good but as he derives the knowledge from this unchangeable source of good, of wisdom, and of knowledge. When man is brought to see his own imperfections, to bow down and yield obedience to God, and become passive like the earth, as I observed, or as expressed by the parable that Jesus put forth to the people, in his day—“The kingdom of God cometh not with outward observation : for behold the kingdom of God is within you ;” and the kingdom of God is not a kingdom of this world. No, the kingdom of the Lord’s children is not of this world, as Jesus, the first born of perfection, that we have a particular account of, among men, declared, that the kingdom of God is not of this world.

Now let us have a care, my friends, that we do not suffer these improper desires to gain ground, by giving way to the desires that lead after glory and honour, to take part in the kingdoms of the world and of God, at the same time. We cannot be heirs of both kingdoms at the same time. Here we are brought to see, that if we are heirs of God we cannot touch or take part in the governments of the world; because they stand eternally in opposition to the government of the God of heaven. Why? Because all their laws are made in the wisdom of man, which is foolishness with God. And yet they are necessary among those who are thus ignorant and behind hand in knowledge, to keep men from violent acts, and from hurting one onother; but that is no reason that the law of the Almighty should not prevail. Because that will supersede all laws, made by the children of men on earth. It will lead us to do good in such a manner that other laws will never operate to our hurt. If we are faithful; if we come under the regulating influence of God in our souls, it will take away the necessity of all other laws from us; and they will let us live in peace, every where upon the earth, without any molestation. It will rejoice the rulers, that a portion of the people never give them any trouble, by violating the laws.

Here now, being brought into the divine na-

ture, every thing that emits from us, is light in a degree ; the same as that which emits from the Holy One to his children. And here, as every soul has a witness for God in itself, so that witness bears testimony to the righteousness of these, and in such a manner that the worst men are obliged to leave them, and cannot take up sword against them. Let them be scattered where they may, they must see all in this way, and understand the law and discipline in our souls. Here we shall have confidence to believe, that none of the nations of the earth would harm us—that not all the wickedness of men would do us any injury. We having the witness in ourselves, the wisdom of God would so manifest itself, that we should all be the best of friends, and ready to do each other every good. Here we should see the way, and behold the medium by which we should experience and know gradually—even as individuals came to it, so would societies and nations ;—by which the prophecy would be fulfilled : “ And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” We should all feel that kind of confidence, that we should never have need of a sword, so long as we were under the regulating influence of the Lord’s discipline. It would be as the power of light over every heart. Do

not think that if we come to this alone it is sufficient. We are made social beings in respect to one another, and we need right order and discipline ; but this right order and discipline must be of God; it must not be the contrivance of men and mortals. And as to the outward letter of it, it would be very small and concise; for all have, at a certain age, the law within themselves, and yet, though they have the law in themselves, still they have propensities and desires at their command, that this law seems not to be a restraint to. Here we see it to be so, because it is a truth, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And why was it so? Because we had not learned to know the difference between good and evil, and we undertook to know it ourselves ; and presumed to indulge our propensities beyond due bounds ; and not being subject to the divine law, we enlist in these passions and propensities, which, though necessary, yet they may be abused. They bring about our probationary state—a state needful—a state necessary to enable man to rise from the state into which he has fallen, or in which he has been created, into a state of true wisdom and knowledge, into a greatness of soul, prepared to inhabit Heaven and the realms of bliss, with God and the spirits of just men made perfect. Here we grow into one degree of knowledge after another. We must be children before we are men. Children bring no

knowledge with them into the world ; they must learn every thing here. Here we see the necessity of discipline in families. No man or woman is fit to be a parent, till they come to know the Lord's discipline in themselves ; for until they know this, how can they form a discipline for their children ? The parent is to account for them, while they have no judgment of their own, therefore, it is their business to govern all their propensities and passions, and not suffer their anger to rise, and poison their hearts. They are not to indulge their children improperly : to leave them to themselves, without discipline, is very wrong. The parent must come to know and act willingly, and not till then, are they fit to be parents : or, in other words, till they submit to the holy law ; for the law of God is the cross of the soul. I say that it is not fit, that men and women should have children till they are willing to come here and wait for the blessing.

I would not have them put off uniting in marriage, by which the Almighty designed in his wisdom, that our species should be propagated, and be multiplied upon the earth. No, because the first choice that a rational soul ought to make, when he feels a capacity to receive a law, is to submit himself to the discipline of the divine law in the soul ;—and he must feel that it comes, as I have observed. We have a consciousness when we have done wrong ; which could not be the

case unless we had a decisive rule which speaks peace and joy to our good acts, and trouble to our transgressions. As soon as the dear youth feel this, then is their time to lay hold of this great and excellent teacher. If they would seek God and be willing to be governed by his law, and the dictates of his light in their souls ; then, previous to arriving at a state of manhood, suitable to unite together in conjugal bands—they would previous to this, make that great and blessed choice, to “seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ;” and they would feel and believe the truth of the testimony of Jesus, that “all these things shall be added unto you.” That is, every thing that can make us happy in time, and confirm our happiness in eternity. If we are willing to come under the influence of the divine law, and be passive in the divine hand, and never suffer our desires or propensities to rise higher than the will of God allows ; he will give us every thing good ; and we shall feel the holy influence of his power, and every desire of the soul will be answered. All things will be given for these poor bodies, that they need ; we shall be blessed, not only with the dew of Heaven, but with the fatness of the earth, to keep us in a situation for which we should return thanks.

It would bring us to witness in our own solid experience, the truth of what the apostle said :

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks.” For so it is with the devoted soul, who becomes passive under the divine law. He is continually in a state of rejoicing,—continually in a state of prayer.

When the soul is brought to see its own impotence ; that it must receive every thing,—every blessing from the hand of God, it then aspires to God. Here it is, that the soul feels a state in which it is willing to return thanksgiving to him. It is then reduced to that state, in which it is kept under the regulating influence and law of divine light and power.

Now, in the way of discipline : the Quaker discipline ought to be a right one ; for it professes to be founded upon this light of truth,—this light of Heaven. It ought to be so good, that no fault could be found with it. It would be so if we were only faithful. But, alas ! instead of making this choice, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we are too much like others, in the letter. We want to be taught by our outward senses ; by something suited to our own carnal desires. Where the discipline is based upon, and made of, counterfeit things, it does more hurt than good,—and by an improper execution of it.

There is no fault to be found with the discipline of the true Quaker ; for what I mean by a true Quaker is a trembler before Almighty God ;

one that has been humbled in the manner that I expressed, that trembles at his word. Oh! that we were all of this kind; then all our care would be to adopt no order that would hurt or wound; but all would have a tendency of emitting to one another, strength and confirmation in the way of righteousness.

O my beloved friends, I mention these things, that we may be in a way of improvement. For I am persuaded, that whatever the views of this assembly may be,—however we may differ in religious views, yet there is but one right view; and that is, to come to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. What way is this to be done? There is no other way but to come to the light of truth in our hearts; and this is the Quaker principle, that nothing is right, but what flows from this divine light and love in the soul. Then, I conceive, that all the professors of religion, the world over, if they would come to this, would all be Quakers, if I may so express it. Not that I would set Quakers above others, but I consider a true Quaker, a child of God. Therefore, every one under heaven, that does right, is a Quaker; because the name was given in reproach, to those who trembled at the fear of the Lord. There are such, I make no doubt, all over the world, though unhappily the number is small—especially of those who feel their way so clear, that

there is nothing to hinder their continual joy and rejoicing. There is nothing in the way but our own wills, and therefore, if we would come to see in what true enjoyment consists, we must keep up the mortification of the will, by keeping in view the divine law, which is a cross to fallen man.

Now may I a little apply these things. We are together a mixed company; but let us all take up a resolution, to be governed by that divine light which gives us a consciousness of good and evil in our own minds. For it is as clear as the light of the outward sun, which reveals to us outward objects, and it gives us such evidence as enables us to discern between thing and thing. The outward sun brings things to us through the medium of our external senses. And this divine light, or internal sun, is a revealer of secrets to the rational soul, and reason is the balance power in the soul, and is to make use of what revelation has furnished it with. Man is nothing without this internal sun. We see that if it was not for the light of the sun outwardly, all would be darkness—our reason would be of no use; we might all die together, and drop down into a state of annihilation. But as that orb shines upon us, it warms us, and causes animation to all the creation, under the influence and direction of the divine law. So it is that it reveals all things here, which are visible to us. It is cer-

tainly a revelation in outward things, as God is a revealer of secrets in the soul, or of things that are hidden.

It is a great truth, that no man “knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him.” What is the spirit of man, in his animal nature? It is the air and breath of this world, that animates his animal body, and gives it action. The eye is opened by it, and the ear acts in its proper sphere. And here it is, through this medium, that the sun reveals all those things which would be secret, unless by its shining they are rendered visible. So, “the things of God knoweth no man,” but as God, who is the sun of the spiritual world, reveals them to him. And we stand in as much need to have the things that relate to God and his kingdom manifested to us by the light of this internal sun, as a man has need of the revelation of the outward sun in things that relate to the external world. To know the things of God and heaven, we need a light from heaven: and this sun is no where else to be found, but in our own souls. It is there we must see it. And as we become willing to wait, as in the night season, for the rising of the sun in its own time, so we must wait for the light of heaven. Because he withdraws for a time, we are not to rise up in the night season, to seek by a light of our own kindling, by sparks of

our own kindling, for if we do, we shall have to lie down in sorrow.

Here now, when this is the case, the things in the law of God are explained, and opened to our minds; the rational soul has materials, spiritual materials, to look over and consider whether there is any thing that is imprudent, any thing that is a counterfeit. For we find that antichrist transforms himself into an angel of light, to deceive, and if possible, would deceive the very elect. I say, if antichrist brings any thing up which has a counterfeit appearance, our reason is a balancing principle. And here, if it is kept, and has been kept in right order, we shall discern between truth and error; because reason and truth, and the law of God, never act contrary to the understanding given to the rational soul.

Right reason is as much a gift of God, as any gift that we can receive. Therefore, nothing but the rational soul is a recipient for divine revelation; and when the light shines upon it, and shows any object, reason brings it to the test. If it is kept in the right order, and under the regulating influence of the divine law, it brings things to balance, and it is brought to know every thing which may rise up, although at first sight. If it will not accord with right reason, we must cast it off as the work of antichrist. All that the Almighty requires of us, will always

result in reality; and we are not to believe any thing which does not so result. Here now we see how easy it is to go along, if we pursue the right course: but as free agents, we can reason ourselves into a belief that wrong is right. Just as Balaam did, when he was commanded not to curse Israel. Yet, we find when there was a greater temptation, he reasoned himself into a belief that he might go. He made a condition with the Almighty: I will go, but when I am there, I will do nothing but that which thou shalt show me to do.

Is not this the way we have every one of us done, when we have been brought under the influence of evil? Have we not frequently been staggered by powerful temptations, and been sorely put to it, when the temptation has been augmented by promises of greater pleasure? Have we not been unwilling to receive an answer from the Almighty, imagining that he was like ourselves, and might be persuaded to give us our great boon. We see that Balaam's will brought him into a state of darkness, till he gradually hardened his heart: but he was prevented from cursing Israel, and he blessed them. Yet, he went on in his own way, to instruct the children of that people to deceive Israel, and bring down the displeasure of the Almighty upon them; and so it is now among the children of men. By men and women not yielding to the

first conviction, and by tampering with the Almighty, they reason themselves into a belief, that they may do things which have been forbidden them, and which are not consistent with his holy will, or with righteousness. Look at the many evil things among those who profess to be Christians. How could these things be, if they were not doing just as Balaam did?

Here men, by reasoning against the truth, bring themselves to a belief, that they may hold a fellow creature in slavery. This arises from nothing but covetousness; for it is impossible for any rational soul ever to believe it right to take away the liberty of his fellow creature. He views it and imagines great advantages, and it operates upon him as it operated upon Balaam; when greater princes were sent, and greater rewards were offered, he reasoned himself into a belief that he might go. So men and women have reasoned themselves into a belief, and seem to be serious in the matter, that they may hold a fellow creature in slavery, and still do right. But it is impossible for it ever to be done right, upon the face of the earth. It never was right, and never can be right. Well then, we ought to be guarded how we meddle with those beings who thus hold their fellow creatures in bondage, lest by reasoning ourselves into a belief of the righteousness of the custom, we sanctify it by carnal reasoning. If we are not social beings, and love to be inde-

pendent of each other, this may do ; but if we are social beings, an obligation attaches to each of us, that we fill up our places with propriety in our social communion with the children of men, and that we have no fellowship with these works of darkness, but reprove them, and withdraw our hand from doing any thing to countenance or encourage them, to the perversion of all righteousness.

What an effect it would have, were the multitude of us to say, it is wrong, and we will have no fellowship with those who do it. What a blessed effect it would have. We see that free labour is more profitable than slave labour. And here, by withholding our patronage—here by this upright step we should compel our beloved fellow creatures to set their slaves free, because it is just as easy to set them free as to keep them in bondage. Nay, it takes tenfold more trouble to keep them in bondage, than to set them free ; because when we set them free, we have done our duty toward them ; and if we are willing to pay them all the overplus we wrest from them, it would be an atonement to the God of Heaven for the offence : but till we come to this, what must be the consequence ? Oh ! that we might search this subject to the bottom ; for we are all impeachable more or less. It is in our power if we please, to cause all to be set free immediately ; because a thing that is wrong, and in opposition to divine justice, and God making it mani-

fest to us, we have no right to procrastinate till a more convenient season. Because a man says he cannot do without the help of slaves, shall we conclude it must be so? Is this any thing but selfishness? It is all in the fallen wisdom of the creature, and for which we shall have to give an account by and by. I hope we may all see the day, when this subject will be viewed in its proper light, and when every one of us may be enabled to have a correct sense of the injustice which is now practised.

A word to the wise is sufficient; and these truths are so plain and self-evident, that all may see and understand them, but those who will not see them.

Can we for a moment suppose, that it would not be right, for every slave, within the government in which we live, to be set free to-morrow? Do we not believe it would be the safest, even for those who hold them in bondage? Can we suppose, that, when we are oppressing a fellow creature, and taking from him wrongfully his liberty and labour, if we should set him at liberty and do him justice, he would be revengeful to us? No. It would reconcile him, and make him feel towards us as a brother; and instead of his seeking to hurt us, he would be willing to do us good. I have no doubt it would be so.

Were the poor enslaved African set free, and the thing fairly explained to him, it would result

in a blessing to him and to the one who thus gives him his liberty. I have not the least doubt of this ; because, I am sure, that every just act, is a blessing to them who do it, and to them to whom it is done. It is the design of the Almighty that it should be so, and therefore the principle can never change. “What doth the Lord require of man, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God?” Here is comprehended all the duty of man.

What is it to do justly? It is to be regulated under the influence of the divine law, and to look to that law, always acting in our proper place, and doing what we are convinced to be right, under the influence of the light of God in our souls ; and by which every act of our lives may be a blessing to ourselves and neighbours. It would lead to harmony and love ; because justice has a tendency to produce concord and good agreement. Can a man be an enemy to us, if we have from our childhood been perfectly just to him? Among these acts of justice, there would be like acts of mercy. If they were poor and needed help, justice would induce us to help them. This would be an act of mercy, and every good act would grow out of that charity, that covers a multitude of faults. Under the influence of the laws of immutable justice, all men would love him. It never could be otherwise. This would be the feeling of the

poor slaves, however degraded they may be. Who has brought upon them this degradation ? It is not they who have brought it upon themselves. It is their cruel masters. Therefore, as their degradation grew out of oppression and bondage ; when justice is done to them they will be ready to rejoice in their hearts ; and all the revenge that they might have meditated would be softened down, and driven from their minds. They would become reconciled as brethren, and peace would prevail.

O, my friends, let us no longer reason after the manner of flesh and blood, by procrastinating this justice. If it is but little that we can do, that little ought to be done quickly. No matter how small the sacrifice, it is as necessary that it should be yielded up, as though it was of much greater consequence. By little things great things are made ; and of course, if the inhabitants of our land only, who protest against the injustice of this oppression, should use their best endeavours, it would produce its proper effect. Let us then no longer be guilty of the sin of keeping our fellow creatures in bondage, by purchasing the labour of their hands. This oppression must cease, when the stimulus is taken away, and when there is no demand for the products of slavery. This would be the most righteous thing that could be done on their behalf ; because it would compel the oppressor to cease.

from his cruel oppression. And I have no doubt that they would be, in every sense, gainers by it. And yet there would be nothing but the power of love on our parts; because it is necessary for us to cease from all injustice towards our fellow creatures. For it will ever remain an ordinance of Heaven, "Obey and thy soul shall live."

What are we to obey? We are to obey the divine requisitions; the first of which is, to do justice. The moment that we are shown, by the light of truth, that we have done an act of injustice, that is the only right moment in which we should return justice. If we put it off like Felix, we shall never come to the point. God does not require an outward sacrifice. He never deems an outward sacrifice sufficient. Even under the outward dispensation, it made not the comers thereto perfect. All that he requires of us is to obey his voice; and his voice is nothing but that light within us, that shows us the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. It is nothing else. And the moment that light shows us that a thing is wrong; as dependant creatures, we have no right to reason upon consequences;—it is an insult to the Almighty.

I want you to take hold of the subject immediately; for it is a momentous subject to the inhabitants of this land. I am settled in the unshaken belief, that the Almighty will bless to us the discharge of every such duty. We have no

right to fear the result of discharging our duty : we have no right even to examine into it. The only thing needful for us, is to see that the act is conformable to justice and truth ; and if we find any thing which is unjust we have nothing to do but cease from it immediately. There is no time allotted us for consideration upon such points ; because they come with incontrovertible evidence to the mind. When we have a clear and correct view of the subject, to defer is like Balaam's asking a second time, by which he was left to fall into error. Just so it will be with us. Oh ! how much we have sinned in the case before us !

I do not believe that any rational creature can think it right, notwithstanding they may have been reasoned into a kind of counterfeit belief, by the falsehoods and cunning of man. But still, it remains impossible for them to have an honest belief, that the enslaving of our innocent fellow creatures is right. Therefore, had the children of men attended to the light in their own consciences, individually, it never would have happened.

Now, how are we to get clear of this evil in the land ? Why, when its fallacy is detected, and we see the vileness of our transgression, we must no longer procrastinate for a more convenient season ; we must no longer reason upon the probable consequences to follow from a discharge of our solemn duty. Yet this has been

the case; and will continue to be the case with many. They will say to themselves, how am I to do without the products of these slaves' labour? I can scarcely do with it; and how can I then do without it? But is this good reasoning for a rational creature? It is, if good is to result in evil to us. To do what we conceive to be the manifest will of God, is always right. And if we were not selfish, we should resign and give up to do righteously in all our acts towards the oppressed: and so the blessing would rest upon them and upon us. I have no doubt that if we were brought to do nothing but justice on this subject, slaveholders would be obliged to free their slaves. They would do it immediately; for they would not be such dunces as to keep them when they became an injury and expense to them, and when they might, after freeing them, employ them as other men are employed. It is believed that they would produce twice the profit that they now do, and thus produce, not only a benefit to others, but a comfortable living to themselves.

Now, if we would reason upon this subject independently of selfishness, it would be perfectly clear to us, and we should find with a certainty, if we believe on God Almighty, and his power, that it would be a blessing to both parties; and that we should enjoy the fruits of their labour more plentifully than we now do, and through a far more righteous channel.

SERMON IX.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, MIDDLETOWN,
IN BUCKS COUNTY, ON SIXTH DAY MORNING, 10TH OF
TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

“LET love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned, one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”

These few short sentences comprehend a great portion of the platform and foundation stone upon which the Christian church is built; and upon which it can only be built: and they are all laid by the great master workman, the light and spirit of truth; or in other words, by the Comforter that revealeth him to the immortal spirits of the children of men, and no where else. For he never has been, and never can be, seen by mortal eyes.

Although we give assent to these truths, yet sorrowful it is to observe, that few are willing to practise them; and the reason of it is, that men and women are too generally governed by self-love. Self-love is the predominating principle among the children of men. They are altogether governed by it in their natural and unredeemed

state. And although, no doubt, this self-love may arise from an impression from our animal nature, as well as in all other animals; as a part of their instinct nature induces them to take care of their offspring.

For we see that all creation love their own offspring; and with man it is not only so, as it respects our common nature, as animal creatures; but this self-love often exerts itself by leading him into something like religion, or what is called religion, in the worship of a Supreme Being. For whatever arises out of this self-love, whether it relates to religion, or any thing else, still, if it is of our own begetting, it is our own offspring; and we see how all animals love their own offspring; and this is the reason why we see so little of this undissembling love among the professors of Christianity. That love which is without dissimulation; that perfect love, which leads us and strengthens us to abhor all evil, and to cleave to that which is good; and, however contrary to our own interests, to prefer others above ourselves. Thus, you know very well, as long as self-love predominates, no one can do these things. It is entirely out of the reach and power of individuals in that state; because it is a truth, however ugly it may be, and the proverb will ever remain good, that “every crow thinks her own birds fairest.” So we get along, too much in a state of nature; and yet we are mak-

ing a great deal of stir and talk about religion; when true religion is perfectly an antipode to all this; yea, it is in direct opposition to it.

Parents love their own children, in a natural state, better than any other children. They will always be partial to their own children, in a natural state; and they cannot do equal justice to others. While under the influence of this self-love, they will love them better than all others. And thus it is with all that they have begotten, whether it relate to our animal nature, or whether it be of a religious nature or profession. And we learn, as we are led to reflect as we ought to do—we learn and discover why there is so much contention among those professing the undefiled religion—the true Christian religion; that which is built upon nothing but what is laid down by the master builder, the spirit of truth; that which is built upon nothing but what comes from the spirit. We cannot build in this way, until we go through a course of discipline; we must all come under the discipline of the cross. That will subdue all our self-love, and make us attentive to the directions of the spirit.

What is the cross? Nothing but an inward law written on the table of each of our hearts; the law of the new covenant dispensation. It is in direct opposition to all man's willings and runnings, and, therefore, before we can come to build upon the right foundation, we must come under

the discipline of the cross. Every temper and disposition of our common nature, must become subject to the law of God, and the light of Heaven revealed in our own hearts, and no where else. This light needs no auxiliary at all ; for when we turn to any thing else, we turn away from the spirit into the letter ; from the substance to the shadow, and therefore lose sight of the real object. But the one great thing wanting, among the professors of Christianity, is, to examine themselves, and to prove themselves, and see if all self-love, and every thing else which has arisen out of it, is banished from the soul. For it is to be feared, that a great share of the world's religion, of every name, is a religion of education. The children learn it from the parents ; they are brought to it by external means ; and as long as this is the case, they will be, like children in their leading strings, not able to walk alone, and must depend on being led about by their parents, while they are in this minority. But when they come to grow up, and be men and women, and have strength to walk alone, then it becomes their duty and business to work for their own living, and no longer depend on the parents ; because every generation ought to take care of themselves. But every parent is bound to lead the child until it can go alone ; and if we do as the great apostle declared he did, we shall make great advances : “ When I was a child, I

spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." What are these childish things? Every thing that we get from our parents and outward tutors; for during all this time that we are getting external knowledge, we are, in a spiritual sense, in leading strings, like children who cannot walk, or go alone. Here we are bound by these leading strings; and if we are inquired of concerning our faith or religion, what do we say? Why, my parents did so; my tutors did so; the book tells me so: and while this is their only religion, they are children; they have not come to be men and women; they have not put away childish things. How can these love without dissimulation? How can they abhor all that is evil? They cannot do it, till they feel themselves loosened from these leading strings. They must cast them all off, and consider themselves men, to be governed by the Spirit, as their parents were. For every one, when he is grown up to age, has the same rational spirit; and even children sometimes have it with greater power than their parents. Then they are no longer children; but are at liberty to act as free men. So it must be in a religious and spiritual sense.

Every thing which we learn from our parents, or from the writings of our predecessors, whether one hundred years ago, or eighteen hun-

dred, it makes no difference ; it is all the same thing, if we are under the necessity of applying to them, for the evidence of our religion. We are still in leading strings, and are therefore, children ; of course we have not cast off childish things. For we can know nothing as we ought, until we gather home to that internal teacher, who knows all things, and sees all things as they are. If we have not come under the government of the Comforter and spirit of truth, all that has been said and written, will do no good ; for our instruction must come from him that reveals himself, to every soul among the children of men ; and far above all that can be written or spoken.

Now, we may date the cause of the great weakness, which is prevailing in christendom, to this one cause, resting under the guidance of outward things. Those who do so, may be considered, in a religious sense, as children who cannot walk alone, outwardly : they must be upheld by their parents. These, now, have not been born again ; they have not come to know their Heavenly Parent ; they have not come to put their trust in the light and life of God in their souls. They have kept up the shadow of things, and will even appeal to it, as a more complete decider, than the spirit of truth itself : and here they will bring the teachings of the light of God in the soul, to a written testimony ; to something that their mor-

tal eyes have seen, or their ears heard. But our mortal eyes have never seen the true Comforter; we have never heard him with our outward ears. No, it is impossible in the nature of things. For God is invisible to every external sense of his creature man; his spirit is invisible; and therefore, he only communicates with that which is invisible. Our souls are invisible to us, as God is invisible. Here now, we can get an account of all the contentions that have been engendered by tattling and tale bearing; and we find, that every thing that is wrong among the children of men, has arisen from their acting under the influence of self-love. Their parents have led them into something, or they have got something from books; and they love it, and have made it their darling. Every one must submit to their opinion; and so they are all children together: notwithstanding they take this bold stand, that if they find their fathers and mothers have grown up into still higher experience—and they acknowledge them as such, at times—yet they will show their love and partiality, for what they consider their own begetting: and hence they will not hear to the advice of their parents, or those of more experience than themselves. Here then is the ground of all contention: and as these come to be truly enlightened, they will understand what Paul has said; because this is the

weaker vessel: this selfish spirit is the woman that he forbid to speak in the church.

They had not risen up to the fulness of his stature in the light. This makes all one—every man and woman, who has not come up to that, is in an effeminate state; and has no right to speak about religious matters. They have no judgment or certain evidence; and therefore they might be asking improper questions, and thus darken one another.

As these things were spread before my mind, while I have been sitting in silence with you, I thought right to stand up and express what might be brought before my mind on this subject: for I greatly desire, that all may be delivered from this captivity that now prevails in Christendom. It is a captivity of the very worst kind; for what has ever been more cruel, than traditional religion? It has been the cause of all the bloodshed upon religious subjects. It is now the cause of all the discord and strife, in the varied societies of Christians in the earth: there is no other ground for it. They are living and trusting in traditions; and their highest corner-stone is what they gain from without; and they want all should submit to it, and go back to the letter which killeth, and depart from the spirit which only giveth life. This was the unhappy state of the Galatians, as we find by what Paul says, “Are ye so foolish? Having begun

in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" They had turned back to traditional things: they had observed days and times:— "Are ye not carnal?" he says. All whose religion is of this kind are carnal; for nothing that we can learn from without can bring us out of this carnal state. No, nothing can ever do this, but to turn inward to the Comforter, and submit to his teachings. This will bring us under the cross; it will expel all self-love from our souls, and turn us away from traditions, which are not in conformity with, and evidenced by, the spirit in our own souls. It will show us the necessity of turning from the letter; and of individually coming to know that we are doing our own work. We cannot be saved by a belief of others; for no man can save his brother, nor give a ransom for his soul: and therefore, what a presumptuous thing it is, for us to attempt to force a belief upon our fellow creatures; seeing no one can give faith, but God alone. People are too apt to square their matters of religion, by their own opinion. How incorrect this is; and what a usurpation it is of the divine prerogative! As long as this remains the case, we shall have nothing but discord and confusion among the various churches of Christendom. It all goes to stir up strife and discord. The great and only thing needful, then, is to turn inward, and turn our back upon the letter; for it is all shadow.

Oh! let us turn to the substance ; for even the letter that is most correctly written, is doing only the same thing, that I am now endeavouring to have you do, to turn inward. It never proposes to do us any good. It can do no more than to turn us to that which can do us good ; to the immortal power revealed in our souls ; by the revelation of which those introductory letters have been written ;—not to lead us from the spirit, but to bring us back to the spirit, till it comes to reign over all, above all, and in all our souls, and thus renders the letter to us entirely unnecessary.

And yet the letter, if it is of the kind that I have mentioned, may do for learners—for young beginners ; it may point them to the right thing ; but there is no power in it to enable us to do it. It only shows us the way ; and how few there are, who read these excellent doctrines, that ever come to the practical part. We may have read what I have rehearsed of the doctrine of the apostle, from youth to old age, and what has it done for us ? Are we in possession of “ love without dissimulation ? ” Do we feel its power stirring us to abhor every thing which is evil ; all discord, tale-bearing, tattling, and telling untruths, or truths which are not necessary to be told. Even the truth may have a tendency to defame a brother or sister’s character ; and here it is a shameful thing. To tell things when

there is no need of their being told, is very wrong, because it has a tendency to hurt or wound.

If we move under the power and influence of this pure and undefiled love, we shall always know what to speak of, and what not to speak of. We shall be brought to that fervent charity which covereth a multitude of faults. Although thy brother should occasionally be in a fault; yet that true charity would not let thee speak of it; it would cover the fault, it would endeavour to bury it, and not let it hurt the individual. If one be found in an error, still it may be, that he is not established in it; and if we attend to our duty as we ought, and speak with the individual, under the influence of love and charity, he may be encouraged to come out of it. We then shall have done our duty, and no hurt. We should then wait to see the effect; because we cannot expect to change the minds of the children of men, unless we can convince them; and when that is the case we shall all unite in the same thing. But for want of this charity, this forbearing love, they cannot exercise justice toward one another; they will be selfish. For every creature is fond of his own begetting, whether in a spiritual or a moral view. It is the nature of all, to love their own,—as the crow, however ugly it may be; and therefore, will insist that their black bird is handsomer than the white one.

O my friends, my soul travails in strong desire that we may dispel this enemy from our souls. We cannot do it of ourselves, but there is a medium whereby we can be delivered: there is a balm in Gilead; and there is a physician, who can heal all our wounds, and bind the strong man, self, in us, and cast him out; and when he has cast him out, under the assistance of the divine helper, then he can spoil his goods. Every thing that is done in selfishness, is an enemy of the love of God. Oh! may this selfishness be dispelled from our souls; and may we be brought down into that humiliated state, in which we shall esteem others better than ourselves; “in honour preferring one another.” And as this becomes reciprocal, there will be unity of spirit, in the bond of peace. It is no matter whether we see every thing alike; the great point of union is, to walk in the light in Christ Jesus, and this is never to be found but in our own souls; that as we all believe in this, and our conduct gives a manifestation of it, that we are humble, kind, affectionate, watching against every evil that we can see, as the master did—he directed them to test his conduct by the spirit that ruled in him: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” Now if we cannot convince our brother or our sister of sin, by examining their works, and we find they are led by the same thing; these are the only

ones who can drink together in the spirit. For as our eyes do not see outward objects alike, so it is with things spiritual. We may have different views and all be right.

I consider it as a journey on this or that particular road; the one who goes forward sees certain things which the one behind does not see. But if he should travel on, he would come to the same places, and behold the same objects, as the one who went before; and could bear testimony to the truth of him that went before. But in our impatience, we will judge those who may have seen more than we have. Here then, we see, is the root of all discord. Here we can see what it is that scatters and divides in Jacob. It is from selfishness in the creature, and a want of gathering inward to that principle that never errs; and which can never lead us astray, if we are obedient to it.

But we admit that there are transformations; —that antichrist transforms himself into an angel of light. But who is it that he hurts? Those who are not clear of self-love; those who are not established in the truth. We see what the apostle said; that he would “transform himself into an angel of light, and if possible, deceive the very elect.” But he has not power to deceive those who have elected and chosen this divine principle in their hearts.

We are made rational creatures, and furnish-

ed with a power to elect for ourselves; and, therefore, if we elect this spirit of God in us, for our portion and lot of inheritance, antichrist can never deceive us. It is only those, who are working in their own will, whose religion is traditional, that he can deceive: all those in this state, are liable to be deceived by his transformations. And it must be so, as long as they refer to the letter as their chief rule and guide. It never can be otherwise, till we come to abandon all false dependencies.

Some are so foolish as to say, that God has elected a certain number from the beginning; that he has fixed upon a certain number, which he calls his elect. Now I do not believe in any such doctrine. I believe that he elects none but those who first elect him: for he has given us all the same power, and placed us in the same condition, to answer the end of our creation. He has given us the power of choice; and it therefore depends upon the creature, to elect for himself. The Almighty has set before us good and evil—light and darkness—life and death—and now we are to take our choice. If this was not the case, we should be nothing but mere machines. How could we ever rise at all, if we had been placed here in a state of perfection? And what would all avail us, if we had not the liberty and power of choice? We should be but little better than the inanimate earth. The earth

knows nothing of good or evil; so we should have known nothing, and could have enjoyed nothing more than the inanimate earth, which lies in a state of insensibility. Now we can see how it would lower down the human being, if he knew that God Almighty had fixed him so that he could not fall. What a wretched state, when compared with that condition which the Almighty intended for man in the beginning. He made him and fixed him in a proper abode; he made this abode a place of probation. Here he was made pure and clean from any defilement, but without a knowledge of pleasure or pain: and had he fixed him otherwise he would have remained in an insensible state. But he was fixed so as to rise out of this inanimate state, into one more glorious; one far above this animal state,—after a probationary time. Do we not see the honour arising to man, for his victory in the outward warfare? He may be sorely tried by those enemies who rise up in arms to overcome him, and here is the great honour, in withstanding the enemy of our soul, and of God. As man gains honour by victories in worldly things, so we may consider it in a religious sense. When we meet with that which would lead us from the divine law, instituted by perfect wisdom; if we meet it with firmness, and stand our ground against all the allurements to vice and temptation to evil, we come to be in a degree like our

great pattern, who rose up to a situation, fit to be a communicant with the great Creator, in the realms of eternal happiness.

Well then, let us strive to rise, in the same way, above all these low things ; above all self-love. Let us come down to the witness of God in our own hearts ; so as to sit at the feet of the Comforter. Not an outward comforter, for we have no outward comforter. Mary had an outward comforter. He was a figure of the inward Comforter, which was to come. He was composed, as relates to his animal part, of the same materials that we are ; he lived as we live, with regard to his external and animal nature. The situation of the Jews was such, that they were only qualified to receive instruction from without, by external miracles. And here now Mary, and all the devout in Israel, looked to no other than this outward Comforter. She sat down at his feet in humility, and he enabled her to overcome seven evil propensities, and brought her down into a low and humble condition. And as she attended to his counsel, he enabled her to rise above all, and to acknowledge all her sins, and to centre down into a state of nothingness. All her self-love was brought down, and completely subjected by the cross ; and thus she sat down in complete submission, to wait at his feet and receive the words of his mouth.

Now we see by the account of these two sisters, that it was not enough to love the Comforter; for Martha loved him, but her love seemed to be rather an external love. She undoubtedly loved him, and wanted to do all that she could to serve him. But here was the difference between her love and the love of her sister Mary. Martha did it in her own will and wisdom; but Mary sat down under a sense of nothingness; and had no will or judgment of her own; but waited at the feet of Jesus, for him to instruct her.

Now, how many there are in the present day, among the professors of christianity, who make a great profession of love and religion, and yet all their service to their divine master, is in their own way and contrivance, like that of Martha. And yet they may have a degree of love; but for want of having all self-love destroyed, they can do nothing rightly. Martha, in her self-love, was no doubt minded to do something to gratify him, and to gain his praise; for self-love desires the praise of men.

Now we see this same thing in the present day. Do we not hear people frequently talking about religion? Do we not hear them saying, "why do you not get religion?" Now look at this. What sort of creatures must these be, to talk at such a random rate, as if we have power to get it when we please; as if Martha could serve as she pleased. What sort of religious

people must these be, who talk in this way ; and say that we must get religion. If we ask them how we are to get it, they say, go to praying to God. This is just like Martha. It is the worst thing they could do ; it is the opposite to what Mary did ; and here they get reprehended, and if they will not learn by it, they will lose every thing by and by. They go on to build a Babel of their own ; and it is of the same nature, and set up like Jeroboam's idol worship, which made Israel to sin. So it is, and so it will be, with all religions which are set up in man's wisdom. And there appears to be but very little other now-a-days, but that which is like Martha's. It appears to be founded upon the same grounds as Jeroboam's idol was ; it is all an idol worship ; and whatever man does according to his own will, being an idol worship, cannot be acceptable to God his Creator. For we cannot even pray as we ought, but as the spirit helpeth our infirmities.

Have we, my friends, been concerned to seek aright ? It must be known to every one of us, that we cannot set to praying aright, when the very thing which we consider the most dangerous and the greatest evil, may be the very thing which will do us the most good.

What then are we to do ? Are we to attend to the word of the Lord, and stand still and see his salvation ? Or shall we push forward ?

Which is the best? Why surely if self-love is not in us, we shall be ready to hear the divine word, to stand still and see the salvation of God. We shall be willing to wait and hear the gracious words which proceed out of the mouth of the Comforter; which are spiritual words, that cannot be heard by the external ear; and which come from one that the external eye never saw, and which it can never see.

By this means, all the rubbish will be removed out of society; all strife will cease, love will prevail, and we shall all be in the spirit, and cleave to that which is good. We shall be like-minded one to another. We shall be willing to let our brother and sister do what they believe the spirit requires of them. So long as their conduct is not inconsistent, we must bear with them. Here we shall be like-minded one to another. We shall be willing to set one another above ourselves in honour, considering ourselves no more than we really are; and not setting up our own judgment, and thereby using and usurping the divine prerogative. So long as their views are innocent in themselves, do not let us hurt a brother or a sister. So long as we are innocent and holy in the sight of God, we shall be under the influence of love and light.

What is wanting, my friends, is to gather inward to this pure principle in the soul: it would drive all discord from us; all tattling and tale-

bearing would be silenced. And is there a greater evil, than tattling and tale-bearing? Most discords spring from this source, and from envy; for where there is envy there will be tattling and strife. Be willing, my friends, to turn inward; to sit down in true humiliation. It is this which will teach us true wisdom, and guide us in the paths of judgment. “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth;” and not only the blessings of the earth; but also the enjoyment of Heaven.

Oh! may we be among this happy number. The poor in spirit, the mourner, and they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and all those who walk in sincerity and truth, he will fill with blessings, and feed their souls with angels’ bread. I say, let one and all be willing to enter into the work cheerfully, with a resolution to come to know a redemption from every thing selfish; and from all childish knowledge. For I consider all the knowledge which is acquired by tradition as childish knowledge. We are all in leading strings, while that governs our ways; it gives us no power to act like men. But we are to think for ourselves, and act for ourselves; for no man is accountable for his brother’s soul, nor can he give a ransom for it. We are all accountable for ourselves; and we should never be deceived by another, or persuaded by another from the path of duty: for this would be re-

nouncing God as a leader, and taking up man. I would not have an individual believe a word that I say, only upon the ground of conviction. For any one to come over to my opinion because it is my opinion, I could have no fellowship with such an individual. When they come to see the truth as it is ; when they are convinced and converted to the truth of God in their hearts, they will be united with the testimony in my heart. Here we should become baptized by the one spirit, into one body, and be "made to drink into one spirit : whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free," black or white ; for all who are God's creatures, would be placed upon a perfect level. We are not to consider a coloured man or woman as below us ; because if we do, we give an evidence, that self-love still domineers in our souls. We are to use all alike. For if we admit for a moment, that a coloured man or woman is inferior to us, do we not at the same time criminate the Almighty, and declare that he is not the God that we profess to believe he is ; that he has made a distinction in colours ; and that these blacks are not his creatures, to the same extent that the whites are ? When, on the contrary, it is very likely that the original inhabitants were neither black nor white. God has placed the colour of all the nations of the earth, to suit the climate in which they live. And if we suppose them inferior who happen to

be black, it still adds to our injustice by criminating the Almighty. How abominable it is then, that we, who profess to be led by a higher principle than coloured people, should take them into our possession, by cruel bondage, and degrade them down, and bring them into a state of degradation under us, and not consider them equal, in any respect, with us. We have been the means of this degradation; it results from our wickedness and oppression. We have stolen them and kept them in chains.

O my friends, what will be done in the end, if we are not delivered from these prejudices, which are the effects of this cruel custom? Wo, wo, will be the portion of those who carry along these prejudices to the grave. Those who suppose that coloured men and women are not equal to ourselves, and as worthy of the blessings of heaven as ourselves, are enemies to God and his righteousness. And again I say, we are doubly guilty in crimination, since we know it is we that have been the means of bringing them down into this state of degradation. We have neglected their education when young; and every thing wanting in them, is owing to our injustice and cruelty. And how shall we atone for this horrible sin? We see how they attempted to atone for sins, when under the outward covenant: but still it did not make the comers thereto perfect. If a man stole an ox, he had to restore four-fold;

and so in every respect, where they had done wrong, they had to make restitution. Are we not bound, then, to make some recompense for our wrong? We have taken away the liberty of these people; we have taken away from the coloured population that which is worth more than ten thousand oxen. We have taken away their free agency and their liberty; and under such circumstances, we look down upon them, as a degraded people, inferior to us; and pretend that it would be wrong, to allow them to rise up to an equality with us. Now these are wicked prejudices, that must be accounted for in some day.

My friends, do not put off the time; let us sink down and look into this wickedness; for we are all guilty more or less. There is but one way to do justice; and that is, to turn about and restore that which we have wrongfully taken and withheld, and walk humbly before God. I have no doubt that much might be done, if it were our concern, individually, to shut our mouths and palates against the sweets of oppression; if we would not use any of the fruits of the labour of the oppressed. I see no other way to atone for this great sin; no other possible way for us to be delivered from this unjust act, only to undo what we have done, as far as it can be done; and thus make restitution as far as it is practicable. That this is our duty, there can

be no doubt; it is so clear, that he who runs may read, unless we are in a state of unbelief; —or rather, a belief in what is not true. For the receiver and the thief are considered the same: and I consider that the oppressor of a fellow-creature, who takes away his free agency, is guilty of the worst of crimes, except wilful murder; and I have even doubted whether murder is worse. Is it not a greater crime to take away the liberty of parents; and thus entail bondage upon their posterity to the hundredth generation—is this not greater cruelty, than if they had stabbed the two at once, and taken away their lives? I say, would it not be better to take the life of the parents, at once, than to have hundreds rising up to this state of degradation and bondage; and thus dying from the cradle to the grave?

I want to endeavour to arouse our feelings; for by long custom and tradition we have become so callous to every feeling of humanity and justice, that I fear we shall die in our sins. And Oh! my friends, what will be the consequence? Remember what is the call of the law: and how plain, how simple it is. How does our conduct accord with it?—“What doth the Lord require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” We must sacrifice all pretensions of religion; because all pretensions of religion without this are

worse than nothing. The prophet to illustrate this, begins with all the offerings that the nations ever offered. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” If all these were not able to give access to the divine presence, what is to be done? Why he tells us to do more; to walk humbly, and with open arms relieve the oppressed. “Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow.” Then, and not till then, will he permit us to come into his presence. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”—Here is the great point, to come into perfect obedience to the manifested will of the creator, God. And where is it known? and what makes it known? Nothing but the Comforter and spirit of truth within us. This was the only thing that Jesus recommended his disciples to, when in that outward dispensation; he added nothing to it; and therefore we have no right to add any

thing to it. This Comforter in our own souls was never revealed any where else ; it was never seen with mortal eyes.

It will not do for us to look back at what our forefathers did ; because our situations are very different from theirs. They were seduced by false spirits and wicked men, who took upon themselves to make interest, by gaining the ascendency over their fellow creatures, and selling them as beasts of burthen. Our forefathers, through the deception which was made use of, were brought to apprehend that it might be right; but now the veil is rent from our eyes, and we see it in the clear light, and can plead no excuse. And therefore it will not do to reason from what our forefathers did ; or to say we have no judgment of our own, because our common understanding shows us; every portion of common sense is a clear and absolute witness against this oppression and injustice. I say, therefore, beware that we send not away the light; for the moment that power shows to us the unrighteousness of strengthening the hand of the oppressor, that is the time we should cease from it, and forever after.

SERMON X.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, FALLS, IN BUCKS
COUNTY, ON SEVENTH DAY MORNING, 11th OF TWELFTH
MONTH, 1824.

SHADOW directs to the substance, and effects to their causes. It is a very natural conclusion, from what we every day witness from our own observation, that when we see the shadow of a man, or any thing else, we are directed immediately to the substance, which makes or causes the shadow. Still it is the light, which is the principle, or first cause, which makes the shadow; and it is the light which enables us to see the substance. We see likewise from the same thing, the same power—the light of the outward sun—the effects it produces upon us, and the things around us; and by these effects we discover the cause, and that the light proceeds from that cause, thus enabling us to see it. And as it is thus in a moral sense—in an outward and external sense; so it is in an inward, spiritual, and internal sense.

This is beautifully described in the shadowy dispensation of an outward and external covenant, which the Lord made with his people Is-

rael. The whole of it, from beginning to end, was a shadow and representation of better things. For when Moses was about to build a tabernacle, with all its furniture and appendages, the Lord said unto him, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was showed thee in the mount."

He was led up in the visions of divine light, to see heavenly things, in the spirit of his mind, and not by his external eyes; but by the eye of the immortal soul. For nothing else can see by the light of Heaven, but the eye of the immortal souls of men and women; and they can only see by that light. It is by the sun of Heaven, the sun of righteousness, that causes shadows to be seen, that makes shadows by those things that are in themselves the substance of those shadows. And here we see and discover, in the commands, and in the statutes and institutions of the law and covenant, that there were many things instituted, as being considered pollutions of the bodies of the Israelites, to whom this external law was given. For this law was given only to the Israelites;—it was not given to any other nation or people; because they, only, were in a condition and fitness to receive such a law and covenant. Therefore, every disease of the bodies of the Israelites had a tendency to deprive them of the enjoyment of their heaven, the outward Canaan with which the Lord had declared he would

bless them. As the Israelites were faithful and obedient to his commands, nothing which could make the animal part of the children of men happy, should be wanting to them, on condition of their faithfulness to his requirings. Here, a leprosy was a pollution of the animal bodies of the Israelites. It not only deprived them from partaking of the good things of the land; but it shut them away from the altar, where the offerings of the Lord were brought; and when rightly prepared, the priests and the people eat them together and rejoiced. And there was a very great variety of these offerings, of their kind; as there were different kinds for different purposes and ends. Every one that came under the power of any instituted sickness or disease, which had a tendency to defile the outward bodies of the Israelites, was shut away from the altar. They could not come to the altar with their offerings, till they were cleansed; and they were cleansed by bringing offerings according to the law. When they brought these offerings, the high priest laid his hand upon them, and sanctified them first; and then delivered them over to his priests, the Levites, to prepare them. But sometimes their offerings consisted of bitter herbs, and many other things that were unpleasant and disagreeable. Sometimes they were to be of one kind of creature or thing, and sometimes of another. They were all pointed out.

so that the **Israelites** had nothing to do, about inventing or devising any offerings in relation to their worship, or which related to their continuing in favour with the Almighty. All that was required, was obedience to his manifested will. There were the offerings of harvest and the ingatherings of their fruits. These were feasts of rejoicing, where the honest **Israelites**, improved their time and talents in cultivating the good land ; and while they were obedient, their labour succeeded in their hands, and they brought these offerings, to eat and drink, and rejoice together, returning thanks to the **Lord** for his abundant mercy.

Now, my friends, consider,—it is a clear description, a beautiful description, a beautiful shadow of the heavenly things. When men or women became lepers, they knew that something was out of order ;—that something was the matter, although they might not be clearly certain, whether it was the leprosy or not. They must then go and show it to the priest, and he was to go through a certain line of experiments to prove it according to law. The law appointed the way, and the priests had access to the **Urim** and **Thummim**, by which to explain these things, and to show what offering they must bring ; and how they must be cleansed. But the **Israelites** became careless and indifferent ; and were not faithful in bringing offerings to the priests, ac-

cording to law, nor their gifts into the treasury, as they ought to have done. Therefore, the poor priests were oftentimes left in a destitute and disconsolate state, as their dependance was altogether upon the people. The people were to bring their offerings, and they were to prepare them according to the commands of the law; and for this service, they were to have a portion of the offerings;—they that waited at the altar were to partake at the altar.

So it is now, my friends, too much the case, I verily believe, with the professors of Christianity, who make a high profession of being led and guided by the new covenant law; by the light of heaven;—that light which alone can show us the shadow of heavenly things; and lead us up by its own light to the substance. There is a great dilatoriness, a great want of fervent labour and travail; and therefore when we assemble together, the poor priests, or the Lord's ministers rather, are destitute. Now I believe, that were we rightly engaged, to know and consider well our own conditions, individually, we should know what is our ailment, and what it is that hinders our access to the altar of the Lord. We should know whether it is not a want of faithfulness on our part, to come and appear before our great High Priest; that so we might be instructed what to do, and how we are to bring our offerings, and in what way to

bring them, so as to be acceptable to him. If we do this in honesty and sincerity of soul; he would lay his hand upon our offerings and sanctify them; and deliver them over to his Levites, his ministers, to offer to his people, and for the people; by leading his ministers to a full and clear view of the state they were in, so that they could hand out the offerings, that we might partake of them together, each bringing an offering according to the state and condition he was in. Here we should be edified together, and here it would be verified to all his ministers, as it was under the law dispensation; they that waited at the altar were to be partakers at the altar: so “they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.”

And what is this gospel, my friends? Why we are told by an eminent minister of former days, that it is the power of God unto salvation. It is that which cleanses and heals the souls of the children of men. Now, there was a particular way of effecting this, described in the law; the high priest of the Levites was to pursue a way, in which, when faithful, the Israelites who were able to bring offerings, were prepared to meet together and worship harmoniously. But when the great high priest of this outward dispensation came, as was prophesied of by the former prophets, he was not regulated by those institutes, by those shadows, by those external means. For although he fulfilled them

all in his own person, as related to himself; yet he was clothed with a power to cleanse the Israelites by only a word speaking: and yet he did not seem to be wanting to exalt himself; for when he had cleansed a leper, immediately by a word, he recommended him to go to the priests, and there offer according to the law of Moses. He was willing to be hid: but they feeling themselves cleansed from their leprosy, and wholly healed; they therefore neglected the external part, they neglected the old law, for they were healed without it.

Here we see, my friends, how Jesus, in his outward manifestation, was limited to Israel, as he himself declares, that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Thus he healed every one that believed in him, by a touch, or by the word of his mouth. Here now the light shone by his works. This healing of those outward diseases, was like the shadow that emanated from his outward man: but the power descended from above. It was not in the power of the external part, the body of flesh and blood, to do any such things. But when he effected these cures, the effect seemed to direct to the cause; as though he, the man, had effected these by his own power. But to regulate their views, he declared to them, it is not I that do these things; I that you see, have no power at all to do such things, but my Father, my invisible

Father that dwelleth in me ; that is, the power of the Holy One, the power of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. So, as it is in the moral sense, we see our own shadow, and it directs to the substance or animal body ; but it is the sun, that great orb above us, that makes us to see this outward substance,—the power is all in the light. So in a spiritual relation, the power is in the light.*****

***This animal body of Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary ; and therefore must be nothing as to the visible part, but flesh and blood, as nothing else could emanate from her but what was of her. So here now, this outward body, this flesh and blood, was born of a woman ; which shows us why Jesus always calls himself the son of man ; because he was verily and actually so, for he could not use evasions. Now I have heard suggestions from rational beings, that Jesus mentioned this to deceive the people, to turn them away, to make them believe something that was not correct ; that it was only a speech that did not apply to him. But it was the truth ; for he could speak nothing but the truth, and he knew with a full certainty that he was the son of man, as well as any of us can know so ; and therefore he asserted it abundantly. And the highest station that he assumed, while in that prepared body, was, that he was not only the son of man, but the son of God.

Here now, we learn, as rational beings, by his own testimony, what it is that makes a son of God. We see that this flesh and blood never could have been, in a strict sense, the son of God; but a creature, created by God—by his power: because spirit and matter cannot be united together, and make a being, nor make a son of God.

Nothing but the rational souls of men and women, can come to know a birth of God. And the rational soul never was created by flesh, or through flesh. The animal part is taken and created from the earth by the power of God. Whether like as in the case of our first parents, which is the greatest miracle in bringing forth the body of man, or whether through the help of a woman, it makes no difference; because, when he created man, he gave him the power to carry on this work of creation for himself, as it were; and yet, nothing but his power, can create, or continue creation. Therefore, as every thing upon the earth, is the work of his holy hand, still his power continues in it: and although he made a power in the trees to produce others of the same kind, yet, was his power to be withdrawn from them they would sink into annihilation; for every effect must rest upon its cause, or it cannot stand.

Here we may be learning, if we are willing to improve the understanding which the Al-

mighty, in his goodness, has blessed us with, both to improve in outward things, and likewise in heavenly things, so as to know their use. **He** has hid no secret from us which would have a tendency to be a blessing to us. **He** has all at his command ; all wisdom and all knowledge ; and he dispenses all that can be a blessing and a benefit, to them that are rightly engaged, and no more : for he adds no superfluities. **He** cannot do this. It is inconsistent with his holy nature ; and therefore, at what time the immortal spirit is placed in these animal bodies, he has kept a secret. It is not of the flesh, we know ; it is as invisible as **God** is invisible : and in his inscrutable wisdom, he has created man with a twofold nature ; one part earth and the other part spirit. That is the spiritual part, which is tabernacling in these earthly bodies ; but it was not created with them, nor does it derive its power or nature from them at all, as it is spirit, and all that is spiritual comes from **God**, and must come from **God** ; and, therefore, it is that this light the apostle tells us of, that was in Jesus Christ, came from **God** : “**In him was life, and the life was the light of men ; that was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**” Here now, we all have a portion of the same light ; for “**the life was the light of men,**” and it remains eternally so. It all comes from **God**, and is dispensed to the children of men—and it

was to Jesus Christ, likewise, as man—in the same proportion as to inscrutable wisdom seemed necessary and consistent, to effect the great design, in the creation and redemption of the children of men.

So, here, we see Jesus made lower than the angels, on account of his suffering death. He was tempted in all points as we are. Now how could he be tempted if he had been fixed in a state of perfection, in which he could not turn aside? Can you suppose, as rational beings, that such a being could be tempted? No, not any more than God Almighty could be tempted. Perfection is perfection, and cannot be tempted. It is impossible. And here it is proved to a demonstration, that he came to be an example to the children of men; a great high priest and teacher, in those things which concern the salvation of the children of men. And here he did his office, as a great high priest of the Jewish covenant, in that outward dispensation, in which he was limited to the Jewish people as a child of Abraham; to sum up all the righteousness of the law, by faithfulness to it. And when he had effected that part, by the grace of God that was upon him—for we read that he “grew in stature and in favour with God and man; and the grace of God was upon him.” Then it was not his grace, but the grace of God, communicated to him, as it was communicated to the rest of

Abraham's children—to every one in a sufficient degree to enable them to come up to the law and commandments given them. It will not do for us to suppose for a moment, that the Almighty, when he gave this law, did not at the same time, give them power to fulfil it in all its parts. For if he did not, they could not be accountable for a neglect. But we see that he did this; for here was a child of Abraham endued with his spirit, which he has given to every rational creature, to profit with. He lived up to the law and covenant given by the Father; and in this he justified his heavenly Father, in giving this law and covenant; and thereby condemned the Israelites for not fulfilling of it. Well, when he had done this,—for we hear of no miracles till after all this was done; none at all; nor any thing of his righteousness or acts;—but now when he went into the last institute of the legal dispensation, which was called watery baptism; and the ministry of John, his forerunner, was nearly at an end, divine wisdom thought fit to reveal to John by what medium he should know who it was that was to baptize with the Holy Ghost. It was him on whom the spirit should be seen descending and resting upon him.

Now, we find, that when he came up out of the water, John having baptized him, the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove, and rested upon him. Now, whether this was

open to John's external eye, or whether it might not rather be an expression of John's, that as the dove is the most innocent creature of the feathered race, he made use of it, to express what he beheld in him, and in this power that descended upon him. This was a power from heaven—an additional power and gift from heaven; as by his righteousness in fulfilling the law he was prepared to enter into a higher dispensation.

I consider, according to the tenor of the law, that the whole design, was to lead up some of the Israelites into this state of perfection and fulfilment of the law ; and then that it should be abolished. Hence, the fulfilment of the law was the abolition of the law. He abolished it by nailing it to his cross. Oh ! had the professors of christianity left it there, and been willing to go forward, under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, which alone could qualify Jesus to be a gospel minister ; so likewise, according to his own testimony, nothing ever did or can qualify for the ministry, but the descending of the Holy Ghost from Heaven, upon rational creatures. And, therefore, in the same proportion as we have the descending of the holy spirit upon us, in the same proportion, till we gain a conquest over our passions and propensities, we shall be more tempted and tried. So it was with Jesus, when this holy spirit descended upon him, the spirit

drove him into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan.

Now let us pause a little, and consider what is here meant. Can it be supposed that he was driven into an outward wilderness? Or shall we not suppose, that he was brought by the power of divine light, to see the wilderness state in his own mind? Because, in the outward wilderness a man loses his way, and meets with many trials; and so there is a spiritual wilderness, where man is tempted and tried. Here the natural propensities which are fixed in man, no doubt for an excellent purpose, rise up and attempt to gain an ascendancy over us. Here we find it in all things in us. The propensity to thirst—what does it do? It is a gift of God to the children of men. It leads them to do that which might sustain their natural life. But if not regulated and kept under subjection by the immortal soul, which is placed in us to regulate these animal desires and propensities, it will become injurious to us, by being indulged to excess. For you know we have many propensities; many that are necessary to us: for we could not eat or drink, or have a desire to do it, if we had not a propensity to it. We could not fulfil the command, to increase and multiply and replenish the earth, had we not a desire which led to it. These propensities are all good in their place; and we could not answer the end of our creation without them. As it is not in bones

to think or flesh to reason ; so there is no bounds to our natural desires : but the soul must wait for counsel from on high, and direct the body, and by faithfulness to it, regulate all these desires and keep them within the bounds of reason and truth. This was the case with the blessed Jesus, so that he never offended in any one point ; but learnt obedience by the things he suffered. He had all these desires. The desire after knowledge, and the things of the world, presented itself to his animal part ; and thus it is said to have driven him into the wilderness : that is, he felt that wilderness, which man feels, while in a state of probation. It is the way in which divine wisdom speaks of the church. “I will allure her, and draw her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.” I will allure her,—see, I will draw her. Now what wilderness was this ? It was not an outward wilderness ; but the same which Jesus was led up into : and here it was that he was tried. Here the tempter led him up to aspire after the glory of the world. He told him if he would fall down and worship him, that he could arrive at it,—if he would only submit to this desire, and fall down and worship it, all should be his : but you see how ready he was to reply to this temptation. The divine law always gives us an answer, and if we are faithful, we shall be like Jesus ; when we are tempted to aspire after the glories of the world.

We shall be always able to give a righteous answer, if we are faithful to the truth in our own minds, as fully as he was, no doubt; because he is our example, and we are to follow his steps. Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, satan." Oh! how often has my poor soul been brought to this point, when temptations have arisen, "Get thee behind me satan." Oh! I have seen that it was mine enemy; the light of truth has revealed it to me; and I have felt sometimes, in a degree, like the blessed Jesus. I have seen that mine enemy hath wanted to exalt me: but I could ask no honour or power, for I knew that he had none to give, nor any power to preserve me one moment.

"Get thee behind me, satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Is not this the case with all of us? Have we not this language in our souls; that sometimes tells us, it is not right to serve any thing else in this world. Here if we are faithful to the divine light, we shall in proportion be able to withstand every temptation that may assail us in our state of wilderness travel and probation.

We read that he was taken up and set upon a pinnacle of the temple. And do you suppose there was some power which actually took him up, and set him upon a pinnacle? No, I hope there are none so ignorant as to suppose so. It

was a temptation to exalt himself, for his righteousness—his goodness. And have you not, many of you, been set upon this pinnacle of high honour? Have you not a little religious pride? What was that saying then, to the tempter? He was placed in a dangerous situation ; but not more so than the soul is when tempted to aspire in consequence of its righteousness. The tempter “ saith unto him, if thou be the son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee ; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

We must all come to know these things in our experience ; and we shall all witness them, if we are faithful to the spirit in our own minds. We can read all these temptations in our own experience. As the light of the sun makes shadows, so, spiritually, it is the light that makes the shadow, and reveals to us that which causes the shadow, which is God, the light, the heavenly sun. “ God is light ; and in him is no darkness at all.” And if we are in him, we walk in the light, as he is in the light, as says the apostle: “ If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ; and,” as in our translation, “ the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.” What kind of blood? Has he any such blood as we have ; any such

flesh? No, he has no such blood nor never has had. The immortal soul has not such blood. The blood is the life of the animal, and so it was the life of Jesus Christ the son. The light is the life which the apostle declared was in him ; it is that light which cleanses us from all unrighteousness : nothing else ever did it, or ever can do it. Therefore, it ought to have been said, the spiritual life of Jesus Christ ; the spiritual life in the soul. For there is no true life, but what is comprehended in the Almighty Creator. And of that he could have no more than he assigned him, and he dispenses it to all the inhabitants of the earth.

Oh! what a lack there is on our part ; by which, for the want of faithfulness, we remain as it were among the dead : “for to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” If we were willing to be faithful to the measure of grace committed to us to profit with, we might understand these things in their true light, they would be spiritually discerned. All external things cannot benefit us ; because every thing external keeps our eyes from the sun of righteousness. As we see in outward things, if we look at our shadow we cannot see the sun ; but when we turn away from the shadow, and face the sun, then we can see it. It is just so in heavenly things. When we take notice of the miracles that Jesus did, they were all shadows ; because they acted upon the flesh

and blood of the children of men. When he raised the dead to life, which he did by a word's speaking, it pointed out the power by which this was effected. And here, when we go to the customs of Moses, * * * * * was pointed out by the high priest, * * * * * * * * * and shows the leading up to a higher priesthood.

Here he became an outward figure of the power of the gospel, the wisdom and power of God. Here he is acting upon the outward man; by healing the sick, cleansing the leper, and raising the dead: it is all figure together. Therefore, he told his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." He speaks nothing but the truth: for so long as the Jews had him to look at, they never could rise any higher,—while he was bodily with them. That part must be entirely taken away. It must be dissolved, and be so no more. We must have no remembrance of it; because, if we did worship it, it would be the worship of an image. Let us only remember the glorious works which he did; but no more remember the flesh and blood. Let us have no hand in it. It was only an organ through which the power of God passed, and brought about all these effects; effects supernatural to the power of man; to any ability or power of his own. Here now, he assured them that it

was expedient for them that he should go away; that if he did not go away the Comforter would not come, but if he went away, he would pray the Father, and he would send them another Comforter. What was this Comforter? They were depending on him, and in their carnality they had been led to believe that their Messiah when he came, would take upon himself kingly authority; and would come up on a throne, and reign over the house of Israel, outwardly. Their minds were altogether occupied with the blessings which they were to receive, in their outward good land, which they were to enjoy forever, if they were faithful. Here you see their incorrectness, no doubt; because this "forever" was a time thing;—it was no more than a deed for lands given forever; which cannot be enjoyed longer than during the natural life.

So the "forever" to Israel, in respect to Jesus' coming, it run forever: and that they were to enjoy this land forever was a time thing; it was limited, and ought to have been translated so as to signify, the end of the dispensation, when the Almighty should see the time to abolish it, and do it away, so that man could rise above all dependencies that are external, which were not to endure when the Comforter had come, and they were enabled to sit at his feet, where they could have access to the throne of grace. And what was this Comforter to be? No external

thing; no visible thing. He was to descend upon the disciples in the Lord's time. Jesus declared he could not tell them when. He had no such power; the Lord kept that a secret from him. The times and the seasons are in the Father's hands; not even the Son, or the angels of Heaven could know them. Jesus commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem; not one day, one month, or one year, or any other set time. They were to be stripped of every dependence. He not only told them that he would go away; but he told them that he would pray the Father, and he would send them another Comforter, which should abide with them forever. And what was it? It was the spirit of truth; the light and life that was in Jesus was the same thing; therefore the spirit of truth.

“I will not leave you comfortless.” This must apply to his outward coming when he should be risen from the dead. Then when they took leave of him, after his resurrection, he gave direction where to wait for him.

It was nothing but the spirit of God that could heal the soul, and cure it of all its maladies. So Jesus when outwardly with them, was able by the power which passed through him, even by a touch of the hand, or the lip of his mouth, to cleanse the leper; to give sight to the blind; and to unstopp the deaf ear. Here were outward works upon outward beings; the whole

work was nothing but shadow ; it looked up to the substance ; to what the light of God would do when they had waited a proper time, till the spirit had descended on them from above.

He told them, “ Ye shall receive power when the **Holy Ghost** comes upon you, and”—not till then—“ you shall bear witness of me in **Jerusalem** ; in **Judea**, and in the uttermost parts of the earth.” We see that Jesus could not bear any testimony of these things, till the **Holy Ghost** had descended upon him. So when that had descended on him, and he had passed through trials, by which he was fully proved, and set a righteous example to all those that were led to believe in him : and as all **Israel** had a knowledge of his outward manifestation, they were every one encouraged by the same words, to wait for the same power to descend on them. And not only on ministers, my friends, but upon every Christian ; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. And all the members of the church must be made kings and priests unto **God**, by the power of the **Holy Ghost** descending upon them. This was the apostles’ doctrine, and it must be the experience of every perfect Christian, as was the case with the blessed **Jesus**. He had power “over all flesh, over all principalities and dominions” upon the face of the earth. So must every Christian come to know this power over every thing of a creature-

ly nature, and be in subjection to the cross ; and in subjection to the divine spirit. All principalities and powers must be subjected to this ; we must all come to know them laid down at our feet. We cannot come to be Christians till we experience this in the full sense of the word. We cannot be Christians, till, like our great high priest and example, we overcome them all. He had power over all kingdoms, powers, and dominions. So we must : but as long as we have not got a conquest over all these things, there will be a seeking to be partakers in them ; and here we show that we are not Christians. All who take a part in the affairs of the world, show themselves to be antichristians ; for his kingdom is not of this world. Therefore his disciples and followers must come to be as he was. We must get the mastery over all principalities and all flesh ; because as long as we are under a state of probation, the flesh works against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Here is a contest and continual uneasiness ; and there is no peace, never can be any peace, till we have power over this nature ; till we have a conquest over all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions ; and over every thing fleshly. When this is the case we shall come to be true Christians. We should then become such brethren as Jesus salutes and addresses, according to Paul's testimony. We should be led by the spirit of God ; and as

many as are led by the spirit of God, will be led out of the world's ways, and maxims, and customs. We should be led up into the way of truth; and as many as are led by his spirit, all those become “the sons of God; and if sons then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” Oh! may we “press forward to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God.” It is attainable to us: as certainly as it was attainable by Jesus Christ, so certainly it is attainable by every one of his faithful followers. For the Lord's children are all taught of the Lord, and in righteousness are they established; and great is the peace of his children;—a peace which the world cannot give nor take away.

But we cannot experience it while we are partaking of the world. I deny the possibility of it; “for in the world ye shall have tribulation.”

I would not have any one misconstrue my words; and suppose that I consider all lost who do not come into this Christian state. For though we profess to be under the new covenant dispensation; none are under it who do not come into it. All that are out of it, are still what the rest of the children of men are. They may be Jews or Gentiles, who, through ignorance and the prejudice of education, have not seen beyond those outward things. For I do not suppose that the Jews are all lost. There may be faithful

and pious Jews, according to the knowledge they have received, under the cloud of darkness, occasioned by their traditions and education. So there may be among the varied professors of Christianity, and the rest of the earth. No doubt there are many who are industriously and sincerely seeking the Lord ; being under the power of tradition and education, and the superstition that reigns in the land. Oh ! may we get out of these things ; and make the entire surrender which the true Christian is called to make, and which the example of Jesus shows us the necessity of coming to. For he that is a Christian is a new creature ; all old things are done away, and all becomes new. Mind it, my friends, it is not a part that is to be given up ; it is every thing belonging to us. This makes a Christian : it brings us to fill up the complete doctrine of Jesus, in his sermon on the mount. He leads us on from one state to another, till he closes this excellent discourse—“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Do we believe it ? If we do not, how can we come to it ? I believe it necessary, for nothing else ever did make a real Christian. Here we are brought into the divine image again, by coming to partake completely of the divine nature. For we are then the children of God, as much as any child is the son of his father here on earth. If the son is obedient to his father, he

gives up his will entirely to be governed by the will of his father. So with the true Christian; he has no will of his own, for all things have become new; all things are of God and not of man.

SERMON XI.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, IN THE CITY OF TRENTON, N. J. ON FIRST DAY MORNING, 12th OF TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

IT is said that, "in all labour there is profit." Every command, and every exhortation delivered to the children of men, is delivered to them as rational beings; and they are to understand them rationally. But I conclude, that by this expression is intended "in all *right* labour there is profit." We may rationally conclude, that this is the meaning; for there is abundance of unfruitful labour in the world, that is not profitable. As our life, upon the earth, as men and creatures, depends principally upon the labour of the field, we have very clear evidence, that all those who labour there, are exercised in right labour, provided they are regulated by wisdom and truth.

It would seem, when we are brought to reflect upon the divine character, his excellence and perfection, that he never intended there should be any unprofitable labour, or any which was not rightly directed; but that every portion of labour, should result in good, and to the univer-

sal benefit of the children of men, as social beings.

This is the labour, I conceive, which produces profit: but it is not consistent with the cunning and wisdom of fallen man, to pursue this course generally. And the reason is, that the wisdom of this world is foolishness; the cunning of man, and the wisdom of the world, are foolishness with God. Hence we find, among the children of men, many who, though they labour considerably in trafficking in the effects of honest labour of the field, can hardly be said to do much right labour. They get a living out of the labour of others, by changing and interchanging, in the way of commerce, and by various contrivances to gain, without adding any thing to the real value of the articles in which they traffic. They remain the same after having passed through many hands; and after each of these hands may have received a greater reward than the honest labourer had for them at the first.

Can we suppose, that this is according to the order of that providence, which is perfect in wisdom and truth? I apprehend this subject wants deep consideration.

I do not apprehend, that those engaged in the way which I have mentioned, are the only ones who are not engaged in right labour; but it is the case with all the children of men who are acting according to their own earthly wisdom

and understanding. Even the labourer in the field, may be like a co-partner with those I have mentioned, by coveting more than he ought to covet, and not being content with having his labour blessed in the fruits of the field, and in having food and raiment sufficient. But to exercise himself in hard labour, and give the produce into the hands of those that I have mentioned, and pass it from one to another, till it passes through ten, twenty, or thirty hands, and he that labours hard not enriched by it, and yet every one of these others gaining by it, is inconsistent with divine wisdom. This is what I call unrighteous gain.

Perfect wisdom, I believe, will lead us to that kind of labour that will be profitable to all those engaged in it, and under the regulating influence of this wisdom, we shall learn right discipline; so that having food and raiment, we shall therewith be content. Here we shall see, that the design of divine providence was, that each generation should work for itself, and not one for another; in order that they might be kept out of idleness.

There is no doubt, that great cities, erected among men, are nuisances to creation, as they are all nurseries of vice; and as they are made up too much of that sort of men and women, who love to live by their wits instead of their la-

bour. I believe there is a great want of reformation in them.

I apprehend, my friends, that I am speaking to men and women of understanding, who can comprehend rationally ; and I hope that each individual will exercise wisdom in a view of these things. As our life depends upon the labour of the field, that kind of labour which enables the labourer in the field to go on with his work, must of course be useful. Who are the persons thus engaged ? They are the mechanics, who make the materials for the labourer. In all this there is a certain portion of regular labour, which is productive of good, to the individuals who thus gain a livelihood ; and if limited by truth and righteousness, their desires will seldom exceed what has been mentioned.

What says the man, formerly, that we read of, who no doubt was brought to see these things, as they have been opened to my mind at present ? He was led to make this prayer to the Almighty : “ Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : ” and he gives the reason for this : “ Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord ? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” Or lest he might cry out when he got exalted in the earth, like the king of Babylon formerly, “ Is not this great Babylon that I have built, by the might of my power, and for

the honour of my majesty?" Here we have a view of the danger of riches, and of poverty that comes by idleness. "Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." There is much in these things, my friends.

To suppose that we can rise up into a state and condition fit to become communicants with the king of heaven, without morality—without coming to be rightly regulated in our moral concerns, is a great and mischievous error. We may become pretty good moralists, and not be Christians, or the children of the Lord: but we never can be good Christians till we become good moralists; that is, labouring honestly for our own support. For it is a very great crime for us to want to be supported by the labour of another, or to take the advantage of the labour of others, to live by it. It is criminal in the extent. There is more for us to consider on this subject, than is generally thought to be the case by the children of men.

I have remembered in this meeting, a short lesson recorded in the Scriptures; a short account of the multitude following Jesus. He retired into a desert place, and the multitude followed him, as it would seem, from the towns and villages, where the necessaries of life were handy to be got, and they continued with him for three days. This has taught me much.

When they had thus been three days with

him, he saw their situation, that they must be hungry, and ready to perish, in so much that he did not like to send them away fasting, lest they should faint by the way. He therefore spoke to his disciples to prepare for them; and when search was made, not even the disciples had any thing, nor the multitude, but there was one little lad found that had five barley leaves and two fishes.

Now you see, my friends, where there is nothing to bless, there can be nothing blessed. And you see what an idle situation these people were all in; and how inconsistent they had acted in not taking care to have something with them, to succour them as to their natural life. Among the whole multitude, it seems, there was but one lad who had this wisdom; and what a wonderful blessing it was, that there was even so much; for if there had been nothing, it appears there could not have been a blessing, for there must be something to bless. Now, if we are careful to improve, in the best manner we can, here surely this care will be blessed of God; and it will be a profitable labour. But where there is that carelessness and indifference, which was manifested in this multitude that I have mentioned, what a deplorable state they must be in, when there is not one individual, through whom a blessing may be obtained.

Now the query runs through my mind,—which

I will put to us,—how is it here to-day? is there any thing here to bless in this multitude? Are there some present that have brought something with them? If so, it must be from previous industry and work; for this is not the place to gather food. This is the place to rejoice in having it; and to thank God for the blessing on our former labour. I was induced to put this question to us, from a view of this outward account, which is a beautiful figure and representation of our spiritual concerns and exercises. It points to our duty and our care; that we, all of us, endeavour to imitate the lad that I have mentioned, in a spiritual relation: that when we gather into a desert place, like this, we may not be destitute, having nothing to bless. Here we come together, and might,—if we have been careful, and have remembered, that the soul wants food as well as the body; that it cannot subsist upon nothing,—be favoured to rejoice together.

We are requested and recommended not to be very careful about laying up treasures on earth; but “in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Here we are led to believe that there is an opportunity to lay up treasure in heaven, that is, to be in possession of heavenly treasure; or, to use a more proper expression, to be in possession of heaven: because heaven

is a state. It is every where where God is ; and heavenly treasure is every where where a person has it in his possession. But we cannot get it through idleness ; we cannot get it through trafficking, like those whom I have mentioned in a literal or moral sense. And yet it is sorrowful, to see the very same case in relation to spiritual things, which I have mentioned, as existing in natural things. There are a great many people endeavouring to be possessed of heavenly treasure, without obtaining it through labour. They choose to get it from their neighbours, and to be fed by the labourer, while they remain in idleness, depending upon something without them, instead of rightly labouring in their own hearts, to dress the garden of their own hearts ; to prune every desire and propensity, in such a manner, that it can never extend beyond due bounds ; by which they might always keep under the limitation of truth, by a careful labour of the soul. When this is the case, here we lay up treasure in heaven ; we have it in our own possession. Therefore if we come into a heavenly state— which is only brought about in this one way ; seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Then we have the promise, that “all other things shall be added.” Here again, we must not let our imaginations range beyond due bounds.

What is meant by “all things being added?”

Nothing will be added, but what will be a benefit to us. We must not suppose the Almighty will gratify our desires after great riches. No. The things only which are necessary, are all that were comprehended in the prayer of Agur; and all these would be made completely ours. Under this proper state of reduction, we should be willing to say, Lord, it is enough. We should have no fear of being too rich, nor should we ever have any fear of poverty. Now this is the point, and the only happy point, at which we ought to be aiming. But, as I observed, many are striving to live on the labour of others, in a religious sense; as is manifested in the present day.

Here we see the truth of what was declared by one of the Apostles, concerning some who would rise up and make merchandise of their labour, just like the trafficker in the labours of the field, for the sake of gaining a livelihood without labouring themselves.

Here we see many engaged in selling the gospel; and many others engaged in the same commerce, of buying the gospel. There must be buyers, otherwise there could not be sellers; and we find by the words of the apostle, that they “by feigned words shall make merchandise of you.” The written experience of good men of former ages are the materials, like the corn without; and they have them to traffic with, like the

merchant without, who takes the effects of true labour, and sells them to another. And here they buy and sell that which they have not laboured for at all.

Now these, are all, as I consider, merchants of Babylon. What is Babylon? Mystery Babylon? Why it is fallen Christendom that makes the true mystery Babylon. Her merchandise consists in every thing that you can come across. The apostle speaks in allusion to this great city Babylon, whose merchandise extending all over the nations of the earth, brought all under its dominion. The traffic was so extensive that they dealt in “gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, purple, silk, scarlet and fine linen, and in beasts and slaves, and the souls of men.” Now is not all this kind of merchandise going on in fallen Christendom? Is it not all true? In the outward it is exactly true. We see it and behold it with our eyes; we discover it every day. I say, we see the merchandise of this great and pompous city Babylon; this “mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.”

We see men traffic in, and sell to one another, as slaves, their fellow creatures. They wrest from them their free agency by violence, and when they have that, they have every thing; for without liberty and free agency, their can be no blessing worth enjoying. How exactly this

self state of things corresponds with that to which the apostle alludes. The trafficking in beasts and slaves, and the souls of men, is completely fulfilled in the present day. Do not men barter away their souls, to those of whom the apostle speaks, who make merchandise of their experience and their words? Do they not traffick to save the souls of men? Here they sell their souls really; because they depend on them to save them, when they bring forth nothing but the letter, which is outward, external, and has no soul in it. It contains the experience of holy men of old; and here these can tell us very fine stories, and persuade us to buy their traffick of them; and by this means they make merchandise of the soul itself.

O my friends, that our spiritual eyes might be opened: that we might individually be brought to see the workings of this cunning serpent, the man of sin and son of perdition.

What is this serpent? Why in the allegory which Moses has given us, he has allusion to the serpent, the natural one; for he says, the serpent being the most subtle of any beast of the field. Here we see, if he was a beast of the field, he was not an inhabitant of heaven or of hell. Well, what was he? Why he was a "beast of the field, which the Lord God had made;" and which he had pronounced "very good." Now let us attend to this allusion. It will

spread great light upon our understandings, because he was undoubtedly opening instruction to the rational souls of men, as men, as immortal beings. Therefore, his words must be considered allegorical. As man was to be the head of all the lower creation, placed here upon the earth as a governor of all, he must necessarily be qualified for that important duty; and, in truth and righteousness, he must have the nature of all the creatures that were placed under him, or he never could sympathise with them, so as to do them justice. Here now, this serpent outwardly, which is so subtle in taking his prey, creeps upon his belly in the grass; he whisks his tail to attract the attention of the little animals, while he is watching, and, if they come too near, he seizes them. So it is with serpentine wisdom. Now this wisdom is in man, and this wisdom is that which, when we give way to it, leads us to endeavour to be rising above, and superior to all the rest of the sons of men; and leads us to presume to decide for ourselves, by which we partake of the forbidden fruit. Instead of waiting God's time, we presume in God's stead, to decide for ourselves. See, this is the temptation of that cunning serpentine wisdom in man: it is a part of the propensity in man, that seeks after knowledge. And here it is, that this comes to be a master passion, and takes the seat of God in the heart, and "exalts it~

above all that is called **God**, or that is worshipped.” This is “the man of sin and son of perdition.” Paul explains it pretty fully, when he takes a view of the state of the christian church, which was a very weak one, as the child’s state is weak, therefore the first introduction of the gospel, is the child’s state. It must be but weak ; the disciples had so many things to war with, that they could not rise entirely above them, which kept them in some sort in the child’s state, in leading strings. We see how very hard it was for them to give up the ceremonies of their law. Here now, it shows to us, how weak this primitive state was ; and yet when we attend to it, we find that it was that alone which could open the gospel state. And though we see they were kept in a state of weakness, through their attachment to these external things—though they were hanging, some of them, in these traditions ; yet though this was but the child’s state, which was to be left, they were brought in it so far that they rose to such conspicuous excellence, as to hold all things in common ; brotherly love prevailed ; true christian love prevailed with many. But this was a state that would not stand. He beheld beyond this state a better one. But he says, there must be a falling away first ; the man of sin and son of perdition must be revealed, in the last dispensation of **God** to the children of men. But that cunning serpentine wisdom will

not have an opportunity to transform itself into an angel of light, so as to defeat the gospel.

Every good thing has its counterfeit. As the gospel was then manifested through the honest labour of Jesus Christ, so here now, the cunning wisdom of the creature, began to interfere and work in the dark, and to lead off from an attention to the wisdom of God, which is alone manifested by his light in our souls—that spirit of truth which Jesus commanded his disciples to wait for, and without which, they were to do nothing. By this they were led and guided into all truth, and consequently out of all error. By this they were shown the one thing needful ; and it is the only thing needful ; because every thing else that is done, is done aright as we look to it. So, here now, this serpentine cunning wisdom led them to work in their own imaginations, and to cry out, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,” and some who were wiser, “I of Christ,” as he stood highest in outward manifestation. And yet all four of them were wrong. Because those who said, “Christ,” no doubt meant the outward Christ, as he was limited to that particular people. They were the people that he was to heal outwardly, as he blessed the loaves to feed the multitude. Now, see how clear it is ; it goes to the animal body, and not to the soul : the dispensation was outward and external, and related to the animal body. It

was the way and means whereby God Almighty saved the souls of the children of men from diseases and sins. It was a figure of the true thing. It was no more than a figure and a shadow. The substance was comprehended in the power of God. The gospel is the “power of God unto salvation ;” and, therefore, this power must be in every christian. For nothing could save, and nothing ever did save, a son of Adam, but the power of God ; and that power of God must be in the soul, otherwise it can avail us nothing—no more, my friends, than medicine without us, will save these animal bodies. We must take it in us, or it will not answer. So with the power of God, it must rule in our souls ; by which means, as we give up to him,—give up all our serpentine wisdom, he can bind the man of sin, the strong man, and cast him out. But as we are free agents, he does not act by force ; he will not turn out this man of sin, till we are willing to surrender him ; till we are willing to surrender the culprit up to justice. How beautifully this is illustrated in some of the parables which Jesus set forth to his disciples : and in none of them is it more simple and easy, than in the one concerning the kingdom of God. He, in this plain and simple manner, thus addresses his disciples and the people : “ The kingdom of God cometh not with outward observation ;”—which was as much as to say, that all reading, in a purely ex-

ternal sense, would never bring us to an acquaintance with the kingdom of God. No books or wisdom that we can gather from without, will ever bring us to a knowledge of it. Then we should turn in to the divine light in the soul. We never shall come to know it, till we are brought to believe what he has declared, "The kingdom of God is within you." How is this? What does he mean by this? He explains it, by bringing it to our capacity, and to our own experience. "To what," says he, "shall I liken it? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

Now, we must remember that he was speaking to rational beings; and every rational being knows what meal is, and that it has no power of resistance, and it is therefore capable of being acted upon by any other power. But it is not so with man; he is not as passive as the meal, while in his natural state, still he is capable of becoming passive. Now when leaven is put in meal it soon makes the meal feel its operation; and so with this kingdom; although it may be so small, that many have overlooked it from youth to old age, and have paid little or no attention to it—as they go on in this natural state, and do not believe in this kingdom, they never can know what it really is; because they have not been passive to its operation, and of course are

out of the kingdom of heaven, and know nothing about it. We are of course unprepared to meet our God.

But, my friends, now let me appeal to us. However little this thing is, do we not all know something of it? Although it may be very small, do we not feel it in us? What is it that makes us feel uneasy at times? Now we must all have experienced this feeling. It must be the stirring of something, in opposition to our present state and condition. When we do any thing which is not consistent with righteousness and truth, we feel the stirrings of the leaven of the kingdom of God within us. For God is always in his kingdom, and stands in direct opposition to vice. Therefore, every little act which we commit, that he has shown by the light of this kingdom to be wrong, impresses us with a sense of guilt, which lies as a burthen upon our minds. The moment we feel this kind of guilt, that moment we are assured, that we have gone counter to the divine law; we have transgressed against righteousness. For nothing but a sense of this, can produce guilt in the rational souls of the children of men.

Here now, is clearly opened to us, that thing which Jesus called the kingdom of God within us. It is stirring in us, and in its first operation, convicts us, as Jesus told his disciples; "and when he is come, he will reprove the world of

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Have we not been reproved? If we have been, then we know that the Comforter is come—that he has got a place in our hearts. He is watching over us for good, and reproves us when we do wrong. This is the same thing as the kingdom of God; this is the spirit of truth; this is the spirit that is given to every rational creature under heaven to profit with. When it begins its work, we have the power of resistance. We can oppose it, we can reason against it, to gratify our own carnal desires, till we become darkened, and finally yield up to the temptations that are besetting us. And here, instead of becoming passive, men resist and turn their backs upon it, and go on in their old career. Thus they never come to understand what the kingdom of God is. Thus they never know salvation by it. No, because they are determined to save themselves, and so are never saved.

Now this is the ground of all hireling ministry. Because these want to go on in their own wills, they will pay a man to do the work for them; to teach that which nothing but the kingdom of God within us can teach. Neither I nor any other minister of the gospel that ever was, can do the work for another. No, not all the ministers on earth can do it. No man can save his brother, or give a ransom for his soul.

Oh! that we might turn more inwardly; be more

spiritually minded. Oh! that we might exercise our rational powers, in a better way than too many of us do. We shall learn and understand these things, and see them in the clear light of day, if we come into a passive state, under the teachings of the divine light and spirit of truth in our own hearts. This must be self-evident to every one of us, for it has reproved every one of us.

What is meant by reproving the world of sin? The fallen souls of the children of men constitute the world here intended. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He will first reprove us of sin, for our transgressions; and when we yield in submission; when we consent to become the meal, and suffer him to be the leaven, he will bring us out of our sins; he will bring us off and convince us, and if we repent and reform, he will become reconciled to us.

"He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He will justify us for our righteousness; he will open our understanding and our judgment, so that we shall know what to do, and what to leave undone. He will open the path in which we are to walk. Here we shall individually experience with the psalmist, that "night unto night showeth knowledge." Our first step is, to surrender

ourselves up to a passive obedience to the divine law, or the kingdom of God in our own souls. We can find it no where else, my friends. Many despise it, and so cannot come to it. They admit the light in man, but think it insufficient ;— that it is not sufficient to lead him in the way of salvation, but that there must be something greater ; and while they are looking for something greater, they miss their aim, and continue in darkness till they die ; for there is but one means of salvation for the children of men, and that is within them, and no where else to be found.

It is a great truth, which Jesus declared, that “the kingdom of heaven is within you.” Its power is as the leaven to the meal. We read that the little leaven leavened the three measures of meal, till the whole meal became leavened. So it would be with the rational soul, as it is led under the influence of this little kingdom, or manifestation of light. Although it is small, it would show us our darkness, and as we were concerned to take heed to it we should come to know the soul brought under that great eternal, unchangeable law of love and light, that God made with his creature man in the beginning ; and which government is called the new covenant. But it was not new, only to Israel ; for he had never made this outward covenant with any but the Jews. It therefore could be new only to them. To us, it is an eternal, unchangeable covenant of love

and light, made by the Creator in the beginning, upon the condition, that if we would obey him in all things, we should become communicants with him, and grow up into a state and condition so glorified, as to have a habitation with him. Although we have all fallen, “we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” yet he has not shut up his mercy. He is following us from youth to old age; he is wooing of us, and reproving us, and using every means a wise and just God can use, and doing every thing to bring us back, and to gain his rightful prerogative in our hearts. All we have to do, is to become willing to surrender up the culprit, the man of sin and son of perdition, who has taken the seat of God in the heart, and “exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” This is caused by the children of men inventing religions by their own earthly sciences. Every priest in the land, that is made by earthly science, is an enemy to God; and in opposition to his calling. He is a minister of mystery Babylon. And yet the language of the Scriptures is so positive and so clear upon the subject. Jesus when he sent out his disciples commanded them to take neither purse nor scrip; and when they did any good thing, to do it freely. Because they were to be passive, as the meal, to the divine power. It was that power that dwelt in him; and therefore it is the same

light and life that regulated Jesus that is in every man;—a measure of it.

The light only can qualify a man to be a teacher; and therefore, as we freely receive, it don't require any labour at all. It is no matter whether they can read or write in the least degree. The light in the soul can dictate more than all the books in the world; more than all that can be read or comprehended by the external senses. They all fall at the feet of this great teacher, this spirit of truth. But man, presumptuous man, by judging for himself, undertakes to climb up into the tree of knowledge, by means of education societies, and seminaries of learning. They presume to make gospel ministers, but it is an abomination in the sight of God; and it is inconsistent with every faculty of the rational soul. And therefore they are leading astray into the paths of death and darkness.

Oh! my beloved friends, may we individually attend to these things. I feel you all to be my friends; for I don't find or feel, that I have an enemy on earth. My love is so universal, that it reaches to the ends of the earth. Hence it is, that I am willing to give up, to spend and be spent, for the good of my fellow creatures, and the cause of God in the earth; without money and without price. Nay, I would not dare to take the least trifle, lest I should offend my God. It would carry evidence that I began to

We read what the apostle declared, that anti-christ would transform himself into an angel of light, and deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Because those that are not the elect of God —those that have not elected this divine light for their portion, he leads them off and deceives them, like as he led Saul off to transgress the divine command, and set to work in his own will. And we see how offensive it was in the divine sight; and they are all offensive, for they are set up in the will and wisdom of men, under

the pretence of doing the Lord's work, when he has not commanded them. It was the cause why Saul was cast off, and so these are cast off out of his favour.

Now look at it, my friends. I recommend it to our last*****I consider it particularly irrational, to consider any such thing to come from God. If we believe that God is equal and righteous in all his ways, that he by the made of one blood all the families that dwell upon the earth, it is impossible that he should be partial; and therefore he has been as willing to reveal his will to every creature, as he was to our first parents; to Moses and the prophets; to Jesus Christ and his apostles. He never can set any of these above us; because if he did he would be partial. His love is the same for all; and as no man can save his brother, or give a ransom for his soul, therefore the Almighty must be the only deliverer of his people. He comes alike into the hearts of all the children of men; as much in the fornicator, in the thief, and in the liar, as in me. But there it is dead, because the creature is in opposition to God. It lies as a dead seed under the sods of the earth. Some seeds may lie a long time and not vegetate, when they are hidden from the influence of the sun and the rains. So it is with these souls. The spirit is ready to do them good, but they shut their eyes to it, turn from it, and disregard it. It reproves them and makes their lives miserable.

still they go on in their earthly career and wicked pursuits. It is so with all who have not come to know a reconciliation with God. We are all more or less in the same predicament, in the same proportion as we resist the kingdom of God, and the light of the spirit in our own souls. For every resistance brings a degree of darkness and condemnation upon the soul. That I may say with a great deal of assurance, it is the desire and the prayer of my spirit, that we might think for ourselves; that we might no longer place our faith upon another's sleeve. There is nothing can give us faith but God. Faith is the gift of God. But this faith in creeds and the traditions of our fathers, what is it? It is worse than nothing. We had better have no faith at all. It is no better than the faith of devils. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Who are the devils? Apostate men and women who go contrary to God? They are all devils: Every thing that is in opposition to the will of God is a devil. In short they are nothing but what opposes the law of light and the spirit of truth, in the heart;—nothing but what is in opposition to the law of God. And that devil is in us all; as sure as the kingdom of God is in us, so sure the devil is in us. Were you ever tempted by any devil but one in your own souls? No. You never were. There it is that we come to know

God, and no where else. It is the only place where he is manifested.

We can by learning and science, contemplate the heavenly bodies, and the things without us ; but when our philosophy goes no further than to external science, it can never give a man a true and saving belief in God Almighty ; for nothing ever gave a true and saving belief, but his own divine impressions on the soul. You see now, where is the philosopher, the outward one, that by his researches can come to be a christian, that will do God true glory, love his neighbour as himself, love his enemies, and pray to God sincerely for them ? With all the philosophy they have—their views of heavenly objects, and every thing of the outward creation, can it bring any to believe rightly in God ? Can it give the true knowledge of God and his truth ? It is an outward thing, and can give external evidence, but no such evidence will do ; it must be internal. Outward miracles cannot do it. But though there was high evidence of it, yet all this was only to confirm the law ; and notwithstanding the miracles, they were left in an unsaved state, as relates to the soul ; because they all stood in external ceremonies, and they must all be left behind. We must come to the spirit of truth—the Comforter that Jesus recommended his disciples to,—which he told them the Father would send in his name. What was his name ?

Not the name of Jesus Christ will save us :—no ; but that light and life that was in him—that was in the beginning with God ; by which the worlds were made, and that light, it is declared, “en-lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.” Therefore, every one of us has the same light and life, according to his necessity, as Jesus Christ had, in his proportion. And there is nothing that ever saved any one under heaven, but this light ; and this is God in the soul, revealing himself by his own nature and essense ; and as we come to this, we shall witness the truth of another declaration of the apostle Paul : “As many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God.” Now this leading by the spirit of God, is the same as the kingdom of God, and being subject to the leaven. They are still one and the same thing ; they are not two things. And as we yield to the leaven, it leavens us, and brings us into the divine nature ; so that we come to partake of the nature of God, the image of God, in which we were first created. What was it that was created in the image of God ? I hope there are not any so foolish as to suppose, that these animal bodies could have been intended. It was the immortal spirit of man, which is invisible, having a capacity im-pressed upon it—a desire after happiness, that all the world,—nay, ten thousand worlds, could never satisfy. We all have impressed on our souls

this desire after happiness. This is the cause of all our labour and toil. It is all to seek happiness; and when we have gained what we expected to find it in, this desire is still as much unsatisfied as when we first began. We see in the case of Solomon, that he tried every experiment, and had to exclaim, “vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” His soul, now, was just as uneasy as when he first began. As the soul is immortal and infinite, nothing can satisfy it but infinity itself—nothing but God. The soul’s great loss then, is God; and it will be tormented, till it gains him again. So that God is our last prize, my friends. Now, when we are led by the spirit, we are brought into his holy nature. For “as many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God;” sons and daughters of the Most High. As is declared in another place, “I will be a Father to true believers, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God.”

These are those, who become passive to the leaven; passive to the operation of light in their souls, so that they never resist it, but give up under its holy influence, and thus become the sons of God, “and if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.”

SERMON XII.

DELIVERED AT FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, IN THE CITY
OF TRENTON, N. J. ON FIRST DAY AFTERNOON, 12th OF
TWELFTH MONTH, 1824.

My mind was led in the foregoing meeting, to give us a view of the use and benefits resulting from right labour and industry. It now seems turned, to show us the distinction between right labour, and that which is not so. Man is admitted to be a dependent creature; a creature that does not exist by any power of his own, but owes his being entirely to another; and, therefore, his labour, his services, nay, all that he does, ought to be for the glory and honour of him that made him, that preserves him, and gives him all that he enjoys. As man did not make himself, so he is not made for himself, to serve himself, or to direct himself according to his own will: but he ought always to demean himself as the servant of another. This is clearly illustrated in the parable that Jesus put forth, concerning the talents dispensed to three different servants. To one was given five talents, to another three, and to another one: and they were to occupy with these talents, and to im-

prove them ; not for themselves, not for their own honour and glory, but to glorify him that committed them to their charge.

Now this view accords with what we generally unite in ; that the chief end of man is, to glorify God and enjoy him. And here we see, clearly, when he is brought into a state of subjection and willingness to be the Lord's servant at all times, and to do every thing for his sake and his honour, we see wherein the reward lies ; that for these services we are to have a right enjoyment of him. Surely, then, all right labour consists in obeying the divine will ; and in improving the privileges he blesses us with ; that we may return an account to him that gives us these blessings.

The contrast is very clear, in relation to these three servants. The two first,—the five talented and the three talented servants, occupied their talents in such a way, that they gained, the one five and the other two. They laboured consistently ;—their service was consistent with their nature and being, and the result was, “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Here the favour of their master was above all other rewards, and above all praise. But the other servant, although he had sufficient to have brought him into the same enjoyment,

had he occupied his talent rightly ; we read that he put his talent into a napkin and buried it in the earth. You see that this was a parable, for Jesus spoke but little to the people, except by parable ; and we are to explain them : but we cannot do this, unless we apply to him, as the disciples did—to him that gives them forth.

I conceive it very probable, that the one talented servant laboured as much as the others ; and may be much harder ; but neglected to improve his Lord's money. It is no ways probable, however, that he was idle, but he worked for himself ; and he might have done it, under a show of being the Lord's servant, by putting it in a napkin, which may be a fair pretence to religion and virtue, and as a show among men : yet his mind was earthly, and all his labour tended to his own aggrandizement. So that we here clearly understand, that if we, as dependent creatures, who profess to be the servants of God, are doing our own wills, under pretence of being servants, we are putting our talent in a napkin and hiding it in the earth ; and, therefore, we are earthly minded, because we profess to be another's servants, and yet are determined to do our own work instead of his. This may be the case both in a moral and religious sense. For no doubt, as servants and dependent creatures, we are not possessed of any knowledge of our own ; nor can we derive any knowledge to our-

selves,—any true knowledge, while we are dependent creatures, wholly under the Father, and dependent on him for every thing we have, or can have, or enjoy. Therefore, if we have any true knowledge, we must have it from that source, from which we have our being. Every sensible man must acknowledge, that he brought no knowledge into the world with him. We have been created and placed here with two ways to obtain knowledge ; as well as two kinds of knowledge to be acquired, one is the wisdom of the world, and the other is the wisdom of God.

Now, as man brings no knowledge into the world with him, through what medium is he to obtain it ? As none is good but God, so none is wise but him. And as all wisdom and knowledge must be comprehended in the divine essence of the Almighty, so it is clear that he has the only absolute knowledge and control of it all. From whence, then, can man derive any right knowledge except from this source ? Can he derive it from any other source, by his own efforts ? Surely he cannot. There is but the one way to acquire true knowledge. Man, therefore, must look to God who made him ; he must be sincerely looking to, and depending on him, to receive it from him ; because there is no true knowledge any where else. Hence we see, why it is, that all the wisdom of the world, and all the sci-

ence that man derives to himself by his own power, is considered as foolishness with God. And all his wisdom, as it respects a saving knowledge of God, must fall short of bringing him to a knowledge of it. This is fairly settled in the conclusive argument of the apostle Paul. It appeals to us as reasonable beings. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.” His premises are fair, rational, easily understood and comprehended; because we individually know, that no creatures inferior to man, can ever arrive at a knowledge of the doings of man; and, therefore, they cannot arrive at the happiness of man, nor the knowledge of man. In order to this they must be raised up into the spirit of man. Until they are thus raised up, they must remain under man, and inferior to man; and, therefore, they cannot enjoy the happiness and consolation of rational man.

It is then, conclusively true, that no man or woman,—no rational being under heaven, can arrive at a knowledge of the things of God, only through the spirit of God. Man in his natural state is as much below the Divine Being, as inferior beings are below man. Here then we see, my friends, he can have no true and saving knowledge, unless he is led, and guided, and instructed by the spirit of God. “But the na-

tural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." Here we see why the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God ; because man in his fallen state can see nothing wise or beautiful in the things of God ; and while he remains in a natural and fallen state, he delights more in his own inventions and his own researches, and the wisdom that he has taught or prescribed for himself, than he does in the wisdom of God. So the wisdom of God is foolishness to man ; and the wisdom of man is foolishness to God.

My mind seems led to endeavour to convince you, my friends and fellow travellers towards an eternal state, of the great necessity there is, while we are in our progress through time ; while we are in this state of probation and trial, to turn inward, to the witness for God in our own hearts, individually. It is important, in order that we may profit by the light in our own minds, that we humble ourselves to a proper state to receive true wisdom ; and if we attend to this as we ought, I trust we shall begin to know ourselves.

The first step to wisdom, is for man to know himself ; to see what a poor miserable creature he is, and how destitute he is of wisdom and true knowledge ; that he is altogether destitute of them in himself. There is nothing which will

so readily bring the creature into a state of humiliation as a clear knowledge of himself. I conceive that if we could see ourselves as we ought, and as we really are, it must humble every soul in the dust. We should see our dependence, our impotence, our imbecility, and our want of every portion of right knowledge. It is this humiliated state into which a man is brought by a consciousness of his own condition, that prepares him to be instructed by a higher power. We are to wait, to meditate, and not be weary in waiting upon God. We may remember the command of Jesus to his disciples; when they were looking up to him, as their only oracle. They had no other object before them, from whence they were expecting to derive right knowledge and instruction. It was right that they should look up to him, for their views could not, under that dispensation, be raised any higher, while this veil remained over the temple outwardly. For we see that every thing which they were looking at externally, was a veil. Jesus himself was a veil over his disciples; they could not rise to look any higher, whilst he was with them. They considered him completely perfect in relation to all their wants: he was in his outward manifestation a complete veil.

He could lead them by the external rites and ceremonies that had been given them by God, through his servant Moses. They looked for

nothing more: this was the summit of their expectations and views: and so even here, their Messiah, Jesus Christ, was a veil between God and the souls of his disciples. It is clearly so; and must be self-evident to every rational mind. Jesus himself confirms it in the most emphatic manner. He had repeatedly endeavoured to draw their attention off from their high expectations concerning him. He told them that he should be taken from them and suffer death. But they would not believe, and he had to rebuke them for their unwillingness. And at a certain time he recounted to them on this wise. “Because I have told you these things, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” See now how plain this is; as I have told you. Jesus was in that state as complete a veil between the souls of his disciples and their heavenly father, as the veil which separated the tabernacle and the holy place within.

Here now he assures them he must go away, and that they must lose all dependence upon him; that they must be brought into a state and condition in which they would see themselves, in the way I have a little back mentioned, to be poor, senseless, unworthy, dependent creatures, without power to take one step aright.

Here they began to feel the certainty of what he had expressed, “For without me ye can do nothing.” Even when he was with them it was so ; and when he was gone from them they found they could do nothing at all, till the power came to them. He commanded them to wait for instruction. “It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.”

Here now we see that if Jesus had continued in the flesh till this day, the gospel never could have entered, and the Comforter could not have come ; because they were not prepared, nor could they be, until they were reduced into that humiliated state, and reduction from all dependence from without ; even upon Jesus Christ, in his outward manifestation. We must give it all up,—all knowledge and dependence upon external things,—otherwise there will be a veil between our souls and our God. “If I go away”—now see his goodness!—“I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter.”

Another cannot be the same. He was a Comforter to the Jews ; he was an outward Comforter and instructor ; and it was their duty to attend to him in a great measure ; because he was sent to lead them up by a righteous fulfilment of the law ; and when this was effected, to open a more glorious dispensation, and to set before their

eyes a more excellent state to be sought after and secured.

Now that which hindered the disciples, must have continually hindered them. I trust, my friends, that your common understanding enables you to see this. While Jesus remained with them, he was a veil which hindered their access to the divine light in their own souls. He therefore assured them that he must go away; that the world should see him no more: that is, men should see him no more, with their external senses; that he would no more appear externally among the children of men; but that there would be something in his stead, as much above his outward manifestation as heaven is above the earth. This was the spirit of truth; the Holy Ghost; the light and life that was in Jesus Christ, and which was to be as a rule and guide, invisible to the external view of his disciples. They saw it not; it was invisible to them.

They saw the wonderful effects of it in the outward miracles which Jesus performed; and were thereby induced to believe in him as their Messiah. Yet it is astonishing, that notwithstanding the many miracles he did, how few believers he got. We see then the weakness of outward miracles; that they were of little use to men, except to save their outward bodies from diseases, and to save the children of Israel from the outward bondage of Pharaoh and

his people. And so all that outward miracles can do—all that they have ever done—with the law and prophets,—sink into littleness, when compared with a knowledge of the gracious dispensation of the gospel, when we are brought to feel its power and its sufficiency; which will be the case if we are brought into true righteousness. And this is the work of the spirit of God: for the true and saving knowledge of God can only be taught by the spirit of God. That is the only thing that can save us.*****And this Comforter they were to wait for, but how long Jesus could not tell them. He acknowledged to them that the times and the seasons were in the Father's hands, and the son could not tell them. Not even the angels in heaven could tell, for they did not know them. Therefore they were to tarry at Jerusalem. Here, again, we ought to reflect and consider, that as this was an outward place of rest,*****
***And what is the true signification of Jerusalem? It is a quiet place; a habitation of quietude; a state of stillness. But it is for us now to wait in humble silence in the secret of our own hearts: that Jerusalem that we are to wait in, is in the secret of our hearts; there we are to wait till the Lord is pleased to send the Comforter, and show us our condition, spiritually. Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit when he should come, would “reprove the world of sin. and of righte-

ousness, and of judgment." He also assured them where they would find him; "for he dwelleth with you; and shall be in you." So then, if we ever become acquainted with the true comforter, we shall find him in our own hearts—in our immortal spirits, and no where else.

There is nothing under heaven, that is a recipient for the teachings of the Holy Spirit of God, but the rational souls of men and women. Nothing is a recipient of revelation but the immortal spirits of men and women. Take away our reason, and we can have no knowledge of revelation at all. Therefore, nothing but the rational spirits of men and women, can ever become the children of God. And this is only to be effected, in the way that many passages of scripture have pointed out to us. They point us to the true plan, but still they do not enable us to effect the purpose. Nothing can make us believe rightly, but our own knowledge and experience. It is as necessary for us to wait at Jerusalem till we receive knowledge from on high, as it was for the disciples; for as they could not bear testimony of the son, till this power came upon them, so neither can we. Now, when this comes to be the case, that man is left to himself, he feels his own impotence,—although he may have been doing abundance like Saul, who was afterward called Paul. He had great zeal for God as an instrument to promote reli-

gion, as he supposed, in righteousness. But it was all in his own way, and it therefore made him a persecutor ; and so does all religion which is the religion of man. The religion of man's building and man's contrivance, consisting in outward ceremonies, does not make the comers thereto perfect. It leaves the soul in the same state, and with the same nature. But when we come to wait, as Paul waited, after he was met on his way to Damascus, we shall be enlightened as he was. He was blind for some days, and knew not what to do : but when he was enlightened, and the way was opened to him, he seems now ready to set about the good work. And he became as zealous in the way which was opened to him, as he had been in the wrong way ; and I have no doubt, that the same thing has frequently been the case, with new beginners in the work of reformation, when enlightened by the revelation and operation of truth upon the mind. They want to make amends for their past follies, and set about their work as Paul did. He acknowledges, “for the good that I would, I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do.”

The reasonable man that is enlightened, so as to know the true nature and tendency of man's spirit, is willing to be reduced to a state of obedience, to the divine will. And here, the enemy, the tempter, the man of sin that dwells in

us, sets us to work ; and sometimes suggests something to be done. He works like an angel of light, and deceives the simple hearted, and sets them at work, when they ought to be quiet. It was so with Paul ; and we see he could do nothing which would avail. He now cries out in the anguish of his spirit ; “ O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” Oh ! this happy state ! May it be our individual experience. It is an excellent symptom ; for then, no doubt, we shall be brought to that state of rejoicing which the apostle mentioned.

Saul, when he had given all up, and surrendered every thing, and found that he could do nothing good, and had not a right to desire it, but only to wait and be as the mere clay to the potter, and let the Lord fashion him according to his will. When he was brought to this state, then he felt the divine power ; then he thanked the Lord. “ There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ; who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” That is, in the image of his righteousness ; in the image of his filial obedience, in which he kept, having no will at all of his own. “ I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” “ There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." What a blessed experience!—and it is what we may all look for and aspire after. It is what all may attain to, through the grace of God.

The Comforter is no where to be found but in our own souls. All the means of man's salvation are comprehended in him, which is the light within him, and God within him: for there must be a portion of the Creator in every thing that is created. It is not only in the soul, but in every thing else which is created; because every effect must rest upon its cause. We see nothing growing, but what God is in it. Would they not fall into annihilation without the presence of that power which created them? God has given to the tree a capacity to grow, but if his power was withdrawn, it would fall into annihilation.

How much more reasonable it is, then, to suppose that God will ever be in the souls of men and women, whom he has made for the purpose of his own glory; that they might grow up in his spirit, and in a knowledge of his law in their souls, from a state of innocence, to a virtuous and glorified state; so as to be fit to unite with him, in the realms of eternal blessedness.

What a high and great state and condition we are made for! Then why should we barter

these blessings away, these great benefits, for a little dross? Why are we so unwilling to be what we ought to be? We must be willing to be dependent creatures, that must receive every thing from another. When we undertake to do something for ourselves, we rob him of his right. Because he has a right to all our labour; and we have no right to dispose of it all, for we should be as his servants, and ought to consider ourselves at his disposal at all times. Whether we eat or drink, or put on apparel; if we are such servants as our state and condition prove that we ought to be, we ought not to have our own way, even in doing these things. All is to be done to the glory of God, which is the end of our creation. Here then the blessing would come; but until we come to this, to do as humiliated children before the Lord, we fall short of all his blessings. Although he may indulge us in some earthly blessings, yet what consolation can we have in them whilst the mind has not come into a state of perfect peace with God, and the children of men. So that the one great thing necessary is, for men and women to become willing, to renounce their own will. The doctrines of the scriptures are full to this point: but notwithstanding they are as plain as A, B, C, and we continue to read them from youth to old age, what does it do? Nothing follows from our works, that is agreeable to what we read. Because this read-

ing shows no reduction of our will; we go on doing our own will entirely, as much as if we had never seen nor heard of such a book. Here we see, that these external things cannot be a rule; they possess no power at all, to do it. They are mere names; they are nothing but an effect; and, therefore, if we are to receive any comfort or consolation, it must be when, through the operation of God upon our hearts, we are brought into subjection to the divine will, and to wait for the revelation of his spirit, to show us what is right and what is wrong. When this is the case, we can read the scriptures to advantage, because we have the witness in ourselves, which has revealed these truths before we read them; and now it is only a secondary confirmation when we read. When we have come to experience and know for ourselves, then, when we read the experience of those who have gone before, they are only a witness or evidence of what we have learned through a better source. And great harm—very great mischief, has arisen to the children of men, by placing their dependence on external things.

The Jewish nation, placed their dependence and happiness upon the outward law and covenant; and, therefore, when Jesus came to put an end to the dispensation, and to the commandments given through Moses, how offended they were. They were not willing to be instructed. They

still cleaved to their old covenant, and therefore Jesus could say after this manner: "Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. But ye will not come to me," and see, and hear, and know, by which you would read the scriptures in a different manner.

Now the book we read in, says, "search the scriptures :" but this is incorrect; we must all see it is incorrect; because we have all reason to believe they read the scriptures, and hence, they accused Jesus of being an impostor. They were more intent upon reading the scriptures than any other people under heaven. They read them, thinking that through them, they could become wise, by the letter. This it was, that kept them in darkness, their dependence on an outward letter. We understand that even the Gentile people would appeal to them, concerning where Jesus was to be born. They supposed these scribes and pharisees could interpret the prophecies of the prophets. Therefore they read their prophets.

It is undoubtedly so, in the opening of the subject. Ye appeal to them, for ye think ye have in them eternal life. He did not say that they had eternal life in them, but quite the contrary. "Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." But ye are ignorant after all.

The light which is in the soul is the alone instructor, which can open your understanding; so that you will believe in me. It will unfold to you that I am he that was to come. The prophets prophesied, and Moses testified, that the Lord their God would raise up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto Moses, to whom ye shall hearken. To this the Lord Almighty subjoins his testimony to Moses. “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and will put my words in his mouth.” Now Moses was a faithful servant of God; and a deliverer of Israel. Here now, this great prophet Moses was the foundation stone; but Jesus was the top-stone and finisher. They together were to make the building complete.

But here we see that the people have been depending upon the letter. Oh! what mischief has this done in Christendom! What dreadful work has it made among the children of men! It proves itself, what it is; that it is nothing but a history of passing events, which occurred eighteen hundred years ago, a great portion of which may be true; a great deal was the immediate experience of the servants of the Lord, and opened to them by his revealing spirit,—which they have written. But, look back at Christendom, at its rise. Here we see Jesus calling them to an account for attending to the Scriptures; and we see in a short time after, that by appli-

cation to these books, contention entered and divided Christian professors. They were divided by the letter, for it is the letter that kills; it is the letter that divides in Christendom. This is plain to every rational mind. It is as clear as the sun at noon-day. It has divided into hundreds of sects, all fixing their foundation upon this literal book, as though it were a sufficient rule. And so long as it is considered so, there may be hundreds and thousands, for every one can put on a new construction, and give it a different interpretation. There never was any thing made more a nose of wax of, than the Bible: and it is the most mischievous thing, when held up above what it is.

It is not the book, or what is contained in it; for it is all innocent. But it is because we are not willing to come to the spirit, and understand it. For if we would come to the spirit, undoubtedly the spirit would interpret it, so that we should see eye to eye. But we never shall see eye to eye, until we turn from the book, and wait in silence upon God, till he shall be pleased to reveal his will, and then we shall see with one light and one spirit; and when we read it under this influence, we shall understand it. This influence being the same in all, we should understand it alike; its interpretation would be the same to all; it would carry comfort and consolation to the soul, and we should be led by the

same spirit that led the writers of the scriptures, so many years ago. But we never can know their merits till we come to this law. Therefore, if the scriptures could not be written only by the spirit of God, neither can we understand them aright, except by the influence of the same spirit of inspiration. As inspiration alone could indite, so nothing but inspiration can enable us to understand the scriptures as we should. The scriptures are not the cause, they are only the effect. They are worthy of being read if any book is worthy of reading; but we should be raised above all books. Jesus I consider above all books; and I consider that what is written concerning him, his precepts, and example, comprehends more than all the books on earth. I say more, because he was the top-stone of external information. He was at the fountain head of divine inspiration; and he told his disciples, they must not look for his continuance; for he must be as a veil, making a separation between them and their God. He must leave them; they must turn inward to the Comforter within; as all that we know of God must be known in us.

It is therefore necessary for every individual of us to adhere to the same counsel, and wait from season to season, till he is pleased to reveal his will, and open to us the difference between right and wrong. For God must be the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There was

no tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but God himself. Can we suppose there was any thing that could distinguish between good and evil, but that God who created all things. Therefore man, by assuming to know good and evil, contrary to the commands of God, was guilty of taking the fruit of the tree. It is an allegory. It was in assuming the will and power to decide for himself, that man turned away from the divine law written upon the heart; for the intercourse between God and our first parents, was the same as the intercourse now. It was an invisible intercourse to all mortal creatures; and therefore, as we are brought to see and feel our own impotence, and to know that we are nothing of ourselves, and that we have no ability to distinguish between good and evil, we shall begin to see the necessity of waiting to be instructed of God, to distinguish between good and evil. Hence as we are attentive to his light and grace, we shall come to distinguish between right and wrong.

I do not know, how better to recommend us to it, than by the parable of the leaven and the meal. Although this leaven is hidden from the external view, yet every soul feels its operation. We feel God acting on us: for, what but God could reprove us of evil? Is any good but God? Will evil rebuke evil? Therefore, when we feel reproof, we may be sure that there is nothing

in us that does it, but God himself. It is him in his kingdom, which is the leaven in the soul; and as we submit to it, and yield up faithfully to its operation, we come to be led by it; that is, to be led by the spirit of God. And "as many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God."

Oh, blessed experience! Oh, blessed state! Oh! that we might aspire after it. That we might seek it, and leave no stone unturned, till we come to know that we are his children. Oh! that we may be led hourly, and every hour, by the spirit of God. He would teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance. Then we should know the truth of that declaration of the prophet. "The children of the Lord shall be taught of the Lord; and great is the peace of all these children. In righteousness shall they be established."

I am willing to add, as I feel a great love for you all, a sincere desire and prayer for us, that we may endeavour to improve the present opportunity. We have had an opportunity to reflect, which we seldom do without profiting, if we reflect rightly. I feel very desirous that each individual should endeavour to improve by the present opportunity. I have no doubt that many have seen and heard that which is new to them; and I recommend, that they would not

judge before the time—not judge with hasty judgment. Do not let prejudice guide us in doing it; but let us endeavour, seriously, as accountable creatures, to weigh these things. Wait upon God, appeal to him, look to him, that he may open our understanding, to see upon which side truth lies. Then we may all be benefited. It is the secret prayer of my soul for us, that we may from this time forward, be more engaged to seek the Lord. Oh! may we be mindful to seek the Lord while he is to be found. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” He will forgive every repenting sinner: and he never asks any pay, my friends. It is a doctrine as dark as midnight darkness, to suppose that the Almighty Jehovah, has such a hard nature, that he will not forgive a man’s transgressions, without taking pay for it. It is the doctrine of hirelings. The scriptures testify in direct opposition to it. Consider the case of the servant who had of his master ten thousand talents. Now this was a parable. The king should be considered as the Almighty; and the servant considered as a rational soul. When he was examined, and found ten thousand talents in arrear; to try his sincer-

ity, the king ordered that “inasmuch as he had nothing to pay, he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down and besought him, saying, lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” What was done? Did he say he would never forgive him, till he paid him the whole? No, as he had nothing to pay with, he freely forgave him the whole debt.

O my friends, that we might look to these things!—that we might no longer be deluded by false doctrines, and false teachers. Let us come home to the witness in our own hearts. For the repenting sinner will find favour, as the prodigal son found favour with his father. Here we are to understand the Almighty in one place, and one of his accountable creatures in the other. The son had his portion given him, but by indulgence and gratifications, he soon spent his portion among harlots, and was reduced to great poverty. He remembered in his distress, that in his father’s house, there was bread enough and to spare. “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” Here he was brought into a humble and contrite state; and it is the humble and contrite heart the Lord regards. Then be encouraged, my friends, to turn to him. “I will arise and go to my father, and will say

unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight ; and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants."

Well how was it? When he set off to go,—which is the case with a repenting sinner when he sets off to seek his heavenly father,—“ behold, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and commanded the best robe to be brought and put on him.” But did he ask pay? Did he say to his servant, he hath a debt to pay, and he cannot be forgiven till he hath made satisfaction? No, it is beneath the Almighty to do so ; and none but those who love hire, can suppose that the Almighty is to be satisfied with a reward. Let every sinner, then, have confidence in God, return, repent, and live.

THE END.



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